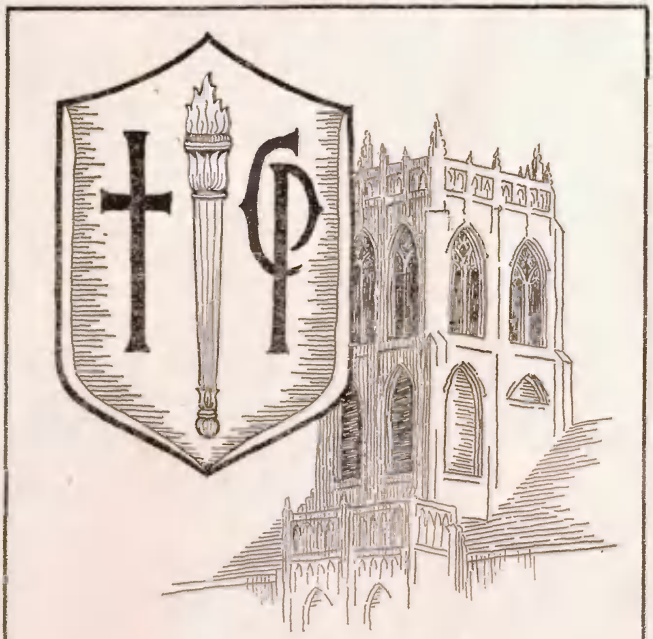

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A HISTORY

OF

THE FOUR GEORGES

AND OF

WILLIAM IV.

BY

JUSTIN McCARTHY

AND

JUSTIN HUNTLY McCARTHY

IN FOUR VOLUMES

VOL. IV.

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A HISTORY

OF

THE FOUR GEORGES.

CHAPTER LXIII.

"OPENS AMID ILL OMENS."

THE closest student of history would find it hard indeed to turn to the account of any other royal reign which opened under conditions so peculiar and so unpropitious as those which accompanied the succession of George the Fourth to the English throne. Even in the pages of Gibbon one might look in vain for the story of a reign thus singularly darkened in its earliest chapters. George the Fourth had hardly gone through the State ceremonials which asserted his royal position when he was seized by a sudden illness so severe that, for a while, the nerves of the country were strained by the alarm which seemed to tell that a grave would have to be dug for the new King before the body of the late sovereign had grown quite cold in the royal vault. It would be idle, at this time of day, to affect any serious belief that the grief of the British people at this sudden taking off, had it come to pass, would have exceeded any possibility of consolation. George the Fourth was an elderly personage when he came to the throne, he had been known to his subjects as a deputy King for many years, his mode of living had long been a familiar subject of scandal among all classes of his people, and no one could have supposed that the prosperity of the country

depended to any measurable extent on the continuance of his life.

George, however, recovered. His illness proved therefore to be only one among the unpropitious conditions which accompanied the dawn of his reign. Almost the next thing that was heard of him by the outer world was that he had inaugurated his work of government by calling on his ministers to assist him in obtaining a divorce from his wife. Not often, it must be admitted, has a sovereign just succeeding to a throne thus celebrated his attainment of regal rank. Then, again, the beginning of George the Fourth's reign was immediately followed by the explosion of a conspiracy belonging to an order uncommon indeed in the England of those days, almost wholly unknown to the England of our own time, and resembling in its principal characteristics some of the Nihilist or Anarchist enterprises common even still in certain parts of the European continent. Thus opened the first chapter of the reign of King George the Fourth. We shall have to go more fully into details, and we only print these few lines as what used to be called in former days the argument of our first chapters.

George was too unwell to stand by his father's bedside when the poor old King was passing, at last, out of that life which had so long been one of utter darkness to him. George, the son, had taken cold in his beloved pavilion at Brighton, and the cold soon developed into an illness so serious that for some days it was believed the new King was destined to succeed his father in the grave almost as soon as he had succeeded him in the sovereignty. George's life of excesses had not, however, completely worn out the fine constitution with which nature had originally endowed him, and despite the kind of medical treatment favored at that time, the old familiar panacea, which consisted mainly in incessant bleeding, the King recovered. He was soon able to receive the official addresses of loyalty, to despatch to Louis the Eighteenth and other European sovereigns his formal announcement of the fact that he had succeeded to the throne, his formal expressions of grief at

the loss of his beloved father, and his formal assurances of his resolve to do all he could to maintain harmonious relations with the rulers of foreign States. He retained the ministers whom he had found in office, and who were, of course, his own ministers. Lord Liverpool was Prime Minister, Lord Eldon was Lord Chancellor, Lord Palmerston was one of the younger members of the administration.

The times were troublous. Lord Liverpool's long tenure of office had been marked, so far as foreign affairs were concerned, by a resolute hostility to every policy and all movements which tended in a revolutionary direction, and to Lord Liverpool and his closest colleagues the whole principle of popular liberty was merely the principle of revolution. In home affairs Lord Liverpool had always identified himself with systems of political repression, systems which were established on the theory that whenever there was any talk of popular grievance the only wise and just course was to put in prison the men from whose mouths such talk came forth. On financial questions Lord Liverpool appears to have entertained some enlightened views, views that were certainly in advance of the political economy professed by most of his colleagues, but where distinctly political controversy came up he may be taken as a fair illustration of the old-fashioned Tory statesmanship. Eldon, the Lord Chancellor, had a great deal of shrewdness in his mental constitution, a shrewdness which very often took the form of selfishness; and although he exhibited himself for the most part as a genuine Tory, one is inclined to doubt whether he did not now and then indulge in a secret chuckle at the expense of those among his colleagues who really believed that the principles of old-fashioned Toryism were the only sound principles of government.

The first business of State into which the new sovereign threw his whole heart and soul was the endeavor to solemnize the opening of his reign by obtaining a divorce from his wife. He went to work at once with the set purpose of inducing his ministers to lend him their aid in the

attainment of this great object. Lord Eldon was more especially in his confidence, and with him George had many private interviews and much exchange of letters on the subject which then engrossed his attention. He accomplished his object so far that it was arranged to leave the name of his wife out of the Royal Liturgy. But even to set on foot the formal proceedings for a divorce proved a much more difficult piece of business. Pliant as the ministers were, inclined to be abject as some of them were in their anxiety to please their royal master, yet the men with whom George especially consulted could not shrink from impressing on his notice some of the obstacles which stood in the way of his obtaining his heart's desire. One of the main difficulties consisted in the fact that a great part of the evidence given against George's unhappy consort during the former investigations had been given by a class of witnesses upon whose statement it would be impossible for any regularly constituted court of law to place much reliance. Again and again in the correspondence which passed between the King and some of his ministers this weakness of his case is pointed out, and it is somewhat curious to find so complete a recognition of it by his advisers when we bear in mind what they had sanctioned before and were to sanction later on.

The Queen herself was on the Continent, and was threatening her immediate return to her husband's country unless some settlement was made with her which should secure her ample means of living and allow her to be formally recognized abroad as the wife of King George. Henry Brougham was acting as the Queen's principal adviser at home, and was doing his best to bring about some sort of compromise which might result in the Queen's accepting a quiet and informal separation on fair and reasonable terms. George, however, was not inclined to listen to conditions of compromise. He wanted to get rid of his Queen once for all, to be publicly and completely divorced from her, to be free from even a nominal association with her; and he was not inclined to accept any terms which merely secured him against the chance of her

ever again appearing within his sight. Brougham was disposed, and even determined, to do all he could for the unhappy Caroline, although now and then in one of his characteristic bursts of ill-temper he used to rail against the trouble she gave him by her impatient desire to rush back to England and make her appeal to public opinion there. There was a great deal of negotiation between the advisers on both sides, and the final offer made on the part of the King was that the Queen should have an allowance of £52,000 a year—not, one would have thought, a very illiberal allowance for the daughter of a small German prince—and that she should be allowed to retain her titles, and should be authorized to use them at foreign courts, but that her name was not to appear in the Liturgy, and that she was not to appear officially in England as the wife of the sovereign. These terms were offered much against the will of the King himself, who still yearned for the divorce, the whole divorce, and nothing but the divorce. George yielded, however, to the urgent advice of his ministers, with the strong hope and belief still in his own heart that Caroline would not accept the conditions, and would insist upon presenting herself in England and asserting her position as Queen.

The Queen, meanwhile, had left Rome, where she had been staying for some time and where she complained of the want of deference shown to her by the Papal authorities. She was hurrying back to England, and had written to Brougham requesting him to meet her at Saint Omer, and there accordingly Brougham met her. Whether he was very urgent in his advice to her to accept the terms it is not easy to know; but, at all events, it is quite certain that she refused point-blank to make any concessions, that she left Brougham with positive abruptness, and hastened on her way to England. Among her most confidential advisers was Alderman Wood, the head of a great firm in the City of London, a leading man in the corporation of the City, and a member of the House of Commons. Many eminent Englishmen—among whom were Wilberforce, Canning, and Denman, afterwards Lord Chief Justice—

were warm supporters of her cause, for the good reason that they sincerely believed her to be innocent of the more serious charges against her and deeply wronged by the conduct of the King. Even her most resolute enemies had to admit that whether her conduct in thus rushing back to England and forcing herself on public notice were wise or unwise, from the worldly point of view, it certainly seemed at least like the conduct of a woman proudly conscious of her own innocence, and determined to accept no compromise which might put her in the position of a pardoned sinner. The nearer she came to England the more cordial were the expressions of sympathy she received, and from the moment she landed on English shores her way to London became like a triumphal procession.

In the mean time the King and his ministers had come to an agreement which was exactly what the King had struggled for from the first, an agreement that steps should be taken in the ordinary way, according to the legal conditions then existing, for the purpose of obtaining a divorce. The course to be adopted was to bring in a Divorce Bill, and endeavor to have it passed through both Houses of Parliament. The proceedings were to open in the House of Lords, and the Queen's leading defenders—for her cause was of course to be defended by counsel as in an ordinary court of law—were Brougham and Denman. The Queen's arrival in London was a signal for the most tumultuous demonstrations of popular devotion and favor towards her, and popular anger, and even fury, against all who were supposed to be her enemies. The house in which she took up her abode was constantly surrounded by vast throngs of her sympathizers, and she used to have to make her appearance at the windows at frequent intervals and bow her acknowledgments to the crowds below. Sometimes the zeal of her admirers found a different way of expressing itself, and the window-panes of many houses were broken because the residents were known to be on the side of the King and not of the Queen. Conspicuous public men who were known, or were believed, to have taken part against her were mobbed in the streets, and even the Duke

of Wellington himself was more than once the object of a hostile demonstration. So widely spread, so deeply penetrating was the feeling in favor of the Queen that it was said to have found its way even into the ranks of the army, and it was believed that some soldiers of regiments quartered in London itself were to be found carousing to the health of Queen Caroline. A crowd of Italian witnesses had been brought over to bear evidence against the Queen, and these foreign invaders, nearly all of humble rank, had to be sheltered in buildings specially erected for their protection in the near neighborhood of Westminster Hall, and had to be immured and guarded as if they were malefactors awaiting trial and likely to escape, in order that they might be safe from the outbreaks of popular indignation.

It told heavily for the case of the Queen, in the minds of all reasonable and impartial people, that while the King's foreign witnesses were drawn for the most part from a class of persons who might be supposed easily open to subornation and corruption, a great number of distinguished men and women came from various parts of Europe in which the Queen had resided to give evidence in her favor, and to speak highly of her character and her conduct. The manner in which the proceedings against the Queen were pressed on by the Ministry had one immediate result to their disadvantage by depriving them of the services of George Canning, then one of the most rising of European statesmen. Canning was strongly impressed with a belief in the Queen's innocence and he could not consent to become one of her formal public accusers, which he must have done were he to remain a member of the administration. Canning, therefore, after a time, gave up his place as a member of the Government, and he left the work of the prosecution, as it may be called, to be carried on by men less chivalrous and less scrupulous. It is not necessary to go at any length into the story of the proceedings before the House of Lords. These proceedings would have been made memorable, if there were nothing else to make them so, by the speeches which Brougham and

Denman delivered in defence of the Queen. Never perhaps in the course of history have the ears of a monarch's advisers been made to tingle by such sentences of magnificent and scathing denunciation poured out in arraignment of the monarch's personal conduct. Denman, indeed, incurred the implacable hostility of George because, in the course of his speech, he introduced a famous citation from Roman history which, although intended to tell heavily against the King, was mistakenly believed by some of the King's friends to convey a much darker and deeper imputation on the sovereign than that which was really in Denman's mind.

The case may be briefly said to have broken down. In the House of Lords, where the friends of the sovereign were most powerful, there was only a majority of nine for the third reading of the Bill of Divorce, and the Bill if persevered in would yet have to encounter the House of Commons. The Government, therefore, made up their minds to abandon the proceedings, and thereupon the friends of the Queen exulted tumultuously over the victory they had won. But the struggle was not by any means at an end. The royal coronation had yet to come, and the King was anxious that the ceremonial should be got through at as early a date as possible. The Queen announced her determination to present herself on the Day of Coronation and claim her right to be crowned as Queen Consort of George the Fourth. Then the advisers on both sides went to work anew with the vain hope of bringing about something like a compromise which might save the sovereign, the Court, and the country from scandalous and tumultuous scenes. Again the Queen was offered the allowance which had been tendered to her before, on the old conditions that she would behave quietly and keep herself out of sight. Again she insisted that her name must be included in the Royal Liturgy, and again the King announced his resolve to make no such concession. Then the Queen once more made it known that her resolve was final, and that she would present herself at Westminster Abbey on the Coronation Day. George had been advised

that all historical precedents warranted him in maintaining that the King had an absolute right to direct the forms of the ceremonial to be used on such an occasion, and he declared that he would not allow the Queen to take any part in the solemnity or even to be present during its performance. The Queen wrote letters to the King which she sent to him through his Prime Minister, Lord Liverpool. George sent back the letters unopened to Lord Liverpool, with the announcement that the King would read no letter addressed to him by the Queen, and would only communicate with her through the ordinary official medium of one of his ministers.

The letters thus written on both sides have long since been published, and the perusal of them will probably impress most readers with the idea of a certain sincerity on the part of both the principal writers, the King and Queen. Let us speak as harshly and as justly as we may of the King's general conduct, of his mode of living, and of the manner in which he had always treated the Queen, we shall find it hard not to believe that there was in the depth of George's mind a fixed conviction that he had real cause of complaint against his unhappy wife. Let us, on the other hand, give the fullest recognition to the fact that although the scandalous levities in the conduct of the Queen abroad told heavily against her, we are none the less compelled to admit that her letters to the King, and her demand to be included in the Coronation ceremonies, seemed to be part of the conduct of a woman who will not and cannot admit that she has done anything to forfeit her place at her husband's side.

The whole story seems now so preposterously out of keeping with all the associations of a modern Court that it startles our sense of historical credibility when we find by the actual dates that men and women are still living who might have been carried by their nurses to see the crowds round Westminster Abbey on the Coronation Day of King George the Fourth. The Coronation took place on July 19, 1821, and the whole ceremony was got up in the most costly, the most gorgeous, and, as it would seem now

to a calm and critical reader of history, in the most theatrical style. The poor Queen did, indeed, make an attempt to take the place which she claimed in the performances at Westminster Abbey. "It was natural," says Miss Martineau, "that one so long an outcast and at length borne back into social life by the sympathies of a nation should expect too much from these sympathies and fail to stop at the right point in her demands." Miss Martineau adds, however, and her words will carry with them the feelings of every reader now, "It would have been well if the Queen had retired into silence after the grant of her annuity and the final refusal to insert her name in the Liturgy." The Queen, of course, failed to obtain an entrance to Westminster Abbey. It had been arranged by orders of the King that no one was to be allowed admission, even to look on at the ceremonial, without a ticket officially issued and properly accredited with the name of the bearer. The Queen, therefore, was allowed to pass through the crowded streets, but when she came to the doors of the Abbey the soldiers on guard asked for her ticket of admission, and of course she had none to present. Some of the friends who accompanied her indignantly asked the soldiers whether they did not recognize their Queen, the Queen of England; but the officers in command replied that their orders were strict, and the unhappy Caroline Amelia was literally turned away from the Abbey door. The King had accomplished his object.

The poor woman's story comes to an end very soon. On August 2, only a few days after the Coronation, it was made known to the public that the Queen was seriously ill. She was suffering, it appears, from internal inflammation, and the anxieties, the excitements, the heart burnings, the various agonies of emotion she had lately been undergoing must have left her poorly prepared. On August 7 her condition became so alarming to those around her that it was thought right to warn her of her danger. She quietly said that she had no wish to live, that she hoped not to suffer much bodily pain in dying, but that she could leave life without the least regret. She

died that day, having lived more than fifty-two years. It was her singular fate, however, that even in her death, which otherwise must have brought so much relief, she became a new source of trouble to her royal husband. George had made up his mind to pay a visit after his coronation to his subjects in Ireland, to "the long cherished isle which he loved," as Byron says, "like his bride." He had got as far as Holyhead on his way when the news reached him of the Queen's illness, and he thought that it would be hardly becoming for him to make his first public appearance in Ireland at such a moment, and to run the risk, perhaps, of having his royal entrance into Dublin accompanied by the news that his Queen had just died. Then, when the news of her death did actually reach him, it was still necessary to make some little delay—joy bells and funeral bells do not ring well together—and thus George, even as a widower, found his wife still a little in the way. The remains of Caroline Amelia were carried back to her native Brunswick, and there ended her melancholy story. It is impossible not to regard this unhappy woman as the victim, in great measure, of the customs which so often compel princes and princesses to leave reciprocal love out of the conditions of marriage. "The birds which live in the air," says Webster's immortal "Duchess of Malfi,"

> On the wild benefit of nature, live
> Happier than we, for they can choose their mates.

Other women, indeed, might have struggled far better against the adverse conditions of an unsuitable marriage and have borne themselves far better amid its worst trials than the clever, impulsive, light-hearted, light-headed Caroline Amelia was able to do. There seems no reason to doubt that she had a good heart, a loving nature, and the wish to lead a pure and honorable life. But she was too often thoughtless, careless, wilful, and headstrong, and, like many others who might have done well under fair conditions, she allowed the worst qualities of her nature to take the command just at the very moment when there

was most need for the exercise of all that was best in her. Even with regard to George himself, it seems only fair and reasonable to assume that he, too, might have done better if his marriage had not been merely an arrangement of State. Perhaps the whole history of State marriages contains no chapter at once more fantastic and more tragic than that which closed with the death of Caroline Amelia, wife of George the Fourth.

While the joy-bells of London were already chiming for the coronation of George the Fourth, the most powerful enemy George's country had ever had was passing quietly away in St. Helena. On May 5, 1821, the Emperor Napoleon died in his island exile. No words could exaggerate the sensation produced through the whole world by the close of this marvellous career. He was unquestionably one of the greatest figures in history. As a conquering soldier he has no rival in the modern world, and indeed all the history we know of, ancient or modern, can give but very few names which may bear comparison with his. Unlike Cæsar and Alexander, he had made his way from the humble obscurity of common life, and, unlike Cæsar, he did not seem to have had in him the intellectual greatness which must have made him, under any conditions, a master of men and of hemispheres. So far as mere dramatic effect is concerned, he was less fortunate than Cæsar in his disappearance from the world's stage. Napoleon was doomed to pine and wither away on a lonely island in the South Atlantic for years and years, and there was something like an anticlimax in the closing scenes of that marvellous life-drama. It is pitiful and saddening now to read of the trumpery annoyances and humiliations to which his days of exile were subjected, and to read, too, of the unceasing complaints with which he resented what he regarded as the insults offered to him by his jailers. There was, indeed, much that was ignoble in the manner of his treatment by those who had him in charge, in the paltry indignities which he had to endure, and which he could not endure in the patient dignity of silence. The mere refusal to allow to him his title of Emperor, and to insist

that he should only be addressed as General Bonaparte, was as illogical as it was ungenerous; for if revolutionary France had not the right to make him an Emperor, she certainly could not have had the right to make him a General. Every movement he made and every movement made by any of his friends on the island was watched as jealously and as closely as if he had been some vulgar Jack Sheppard plotting with his pals for an escape through the windows or the cellars of his prison.

One cannot but regret that Napoleon could not have folded himself in the majestic mantle of his dignity and his fame, could not even, if it were needed, have eaten out his own heart in silence, and left his captors to work their worst upon him without giving them the satisfaction of extorting a word of querulous remonstrance. His captors, no doubt, were perpetually haunted by the dread that he might somehow contrive to make his escape, and that if he once got away from St. Helena the whole struggle might have to begin all over again. No doubt, too, his captors would have said, speaking in the spirit of the times, that Napoleon was not to be trusted like an honorable prisoner on parole, and that there was no way of securing the peace of the world but by holding him under close and constant guard. The whole story of those years of captivity is profoundly sad, and is one which may probably be read with less pain even by Frenchmen than by high-minded Englishmen. There has lately been given to the world in the pages of an American magazine, *The Century,* a continuation of the record once made by Dr. Barry E. O'Meara of his conversations with Napoleon during Napoleon's exile in St. Helena. Dr. O'Meara was a surgeon in the English navy, and was serving in the *Bellerophon* when Napoleon came on board. He was allowed to take care of Napoleon by the British Government, and, as he was an Irishman, he felt a certain sympathy with Napoleon and came to be treated by the fallen Emperor as a friend. He published a volume called "A Voice from St. Helena," in which he gave a detailed account of his talks with the great Emperor. The book was much read

at the time of its publication, and created a deep interest wherever it was read. From this work O'Meara left out many of the memoranda he had written down, probably because he thought they might give offence needlessly to living persons; but the withheld memoranda were all carefully preserved and passed into the hands of some of his descendants in New Jersey, and have after this long lapse of time been published at last. They tell us with painful accuracy of the petty annoyances constantly inflicted upon Napoleon, and of the impatience and fretfulness with which, day after day, he resented them and complained of them. We seem to live with the great dethroned Emperor in his hours of homeliest complainings, when every little grievance that burns in his heart finds repeated expression on his lips. Few chapters in the history of fallen greatness can be more touching than these pages.

Not all that Napoleon said about England, however, was mere complaint and disparagement. The world of London may be interested in learning from these reminiscences how Napoleon told Dr. Barry O'Meara that if he, Napoleon, had had any authority over the English Metropolis, he would have long ago taken measures for constructing an embankment on both sides of the Thames as it passed between Middlesex and Surrey. If Dr. O'Meara had embodied this suggestion in his public volume, Napoleon might unconsciously have become the projector of the Thames Embankment. *Fas est ab hoste*—the proverb is somewhat musty.

CHAPTER LXIV.

POPULAR ALARMS—ROYAL EXCURSIONS.

THE plot which has been already mentioned as one of the unpropitious events that marked the opening of George the Fourth's reign was the famous Cato Street conspiracy. The conspiracy was nothing less than a plot for the assassination, all at once, of the whole of his Majesty's ministers. The principal conspirator was a man named Thistlewood, a compound of half-crazy fanaticism and desperate villany—a creature who believed that he had private vengeance to satisfy, and who had, at the same time, persuaded himself that no good could come to the people of England until an example had been made of the King's official advisers by the avenging hand of the lover of liberty. The novelty as well as the audacity of the plot created a perfect consternation all through England, and it became, for a while, the sincere conviction of a vast number of reasonable Englishmen that the whole political and social system of the kingdom was undermined by such plots, and that only the most strenuous exertions made by the champions of law and order could protect the realm from an outbreak of horrors far transcending any of those that had convulsed France during the worst days of the Revolution. It was soon made clear enough that Thistlewood's plot was a conspiracy which included only a very small number of men, and it has never been quite certain whether it was not originally put in motion by the machination of some of the paid spies and informers whom it was believed, at that time, to be the duty of the Ministry to keep in its service for the detection and the frustration of revolutionary conspiracy. It was the common practice of spies and informers, in those days, to go

about secretly in quarters where revolutionary conspiracy was believed to be in existence, to represent themselves to some of the suspected plotters as fellow-revolutionists and brother-conspirators, and thus to get into their confidence, and even to suggest to them some new form of conspiracy, in order that their willingness to accept the suggestion might mark them out as proper subjects for a Government prosecution and obtain for the informers the credit of the detection.

Thistlewood had been engaged in popular agitation for some sort of reconstitution of political society, and he had been once put on his trial for some alleged offence arising out of such an agitation. More lucky than many other of his contemporaries under similar conditions, he was brought before a jury who found him not guilty of the charge made against him. Now, if Thistlewood had been a sane member of even an Anarchist organization, he might have been softened in his feelings towards the existing order of things by finding that a jury had actually recognized the possibility of his being formally charged with an offence against the Crown and yet not being guilty. But Thistlewood regarded the bare fact that a charge had been made against him as a crime calling out for vengeance, and in his frenzy he got the idea into his head that Lord Sidmouth, the Home Secretary, was the person on whom he was bound to take revenge. Accordingly, the unfortunate creature actually sent a challenge to Lord Sidmouth, inviting and defying him to mortal combat. Perhaps Lord Sidmouth would have acted wisely if he had taken no notice whatever of this preposterous challenge, but, at the same time, it is only fair to remember that Lord Sidmouth might think it dangerous to the public peace to allow a person to go unrebuked who had sent a challenge to a Minister of the Crown. Criminal proceedings were, therefore, taken against Thistlewood, and, instead of being committed to the protection of a lunatic asylum, the author of the challenge was sentenced to a year's imprisonment. When his prison time was over, Thistlewood came out a man inflamed with a desire for vengeance on all the ruling classes

in general, and on Ministers of the Crown in particular. Like the murderer in "Macbeth," he thought himself one whom the vile blows and buffets of the world had so incensed that he was reckless what he did to spite the world. He soon got around him a small gang of agitators as ignorant and almost as crazy as himself, and he initiated them into a grand scheme for dealing a death-blow to all the ministers at once, and then seizing on the Bank, Mansion House, and Tower of London, and from these strongholds proclaiming the existence of a provisional government.

Now the whole notion of such a plot as this, and any possible success coming out of it, may seem, at first sight, too crazy to be accepted by any set of men, however ignorant or however wicked, who were not downright lunatics. But it is certain that Thistlewood did find a small number of men who were not actually lunatics, and who yet were ready to join with him and to risk their lives in his enterprise. The first act in the plot was to be the assassination of the King's ministers. One of the professional spies in the employment of the authorities, a man named Edwards, was already in communication with Thistlewood and his friends. The plot had been for a considerable time in preparation, and it was put off for a while because of the death of George the Third, and the hopes entertained by the conspirators that the new King might go back to the political principles of his earlier years, discard Lord Liverpool, Lord Sidmouth, and his other Tory advisers, and thus render it unnecessary for patriotic men to put them to death in order to save the country.

When, however, it became apparent that George the Fourth was to keep around him the ministers who had served him when he was Prince Regent, it was determined that the work must go on. Edwards, the spy, was able to make it known to Thistlewood that there was to be a dinner of the members of the Cabinet on February 23, 1820, and the opportunity was thought to be placed by a kindly fate in the hands of the conspirators. Meanwhile the minister at whose house the dinner was to take place, Lord

Harrowby, was kept fully informed of all that was going on, and he wisely resolved to take no public notice of the scheme until the day for the dinner should arrive, when the instruments of the wholesale murder-plot could be suddenly arrested at the moment of their attempt to carry out their design. Thistlewood and most of his companions had their headquarters in the garrets of a house in Cato Street, Edgware Road, and there it was arranged among them that they should remain until one or two of their accomplices, who were kept at watch for the purpose, should come to them and report that the doomed dinner-guests had assembled. Then the conspirators were to repair to the neighborhood of Lord Harrowby's house in Grosvenor Square. One of the outpost men was to knock at Lord Harrowby's door, and the moment the door was opened all the gang were to rush in and put the ministers to death. Lord Harrowby took good care not to have any guests that evening, but the outpost men of the conspiracy were deceived by the fact that a dinner-party was actually going on at the house of the Archbishop of York next door, and when they saw carriages arriving there they felt sure this was the dinner-party for which they were waiting. They waited there until the last of the guests appeared to have arrived, and then set out to give notice to Thistlewood and his companions. Before the outpost men had got back to Cato Street the police were already there, and an attempt was made to arrest the whole of the conspirators. A scuffle took place, in which Thistlewood stabbed one of the policemen to the heart. The constituted authorities had contrived to make almost as much of a bungle as the conspirators had done; the military force did not arrive in time, and Thistlewood and some of his accomplices succeeded, for the moment, in making their escape. It was only for the moment. Thistlewood was arrested next day. There was nothing heroic or dramatic about the manner of his capture. He had sought refuge at the house of a friend in Moorfields, and he was comfortably asleep in bed when the house was surrounded and he was made prisoner. He was put on trial soon after, and,

with four of his accomplices, was sentenced to death, and on May 1 the five were executed.

The evidence at the trial made it clear to any reasonable mind that the plot was confined altogether to the small knot of ignorant desperadoes who held their councils in Cato Street, and to the informer Edwards, who had been in communication with them. The public were never allowed to know what had become of this man Edwards. Had he been pensioned by the Government and been allowed to pass into honorable and comfortable retirement, or was he to be arrested and put on his trial like other conspirators? Several attempts were made to get at the truth by means of questions to the ministers in the House of Commons, but no satisfactory reply could be extracted or extorted. Indeed, it seemed quite probable that the general feeling among the ruling classes at the time would have been that the Government had done a very good thing by employing a man to help in working up murderous conspiracies in order that such conspiracies should be frightened out of existence, and that it was quite right to protect and reward the emissaries who had rendered such faithful service. For a time there was a widespread and sincere belief that the Cato Street conspiracy was only one in a vast network of conspiracies from which nothing but the severest measures of repression could save England. The King himself in his royal message to Parliament was careful to make use of the Cato Street conspiracy as another and a crowning evidence of the necessity which existed for the wholesale application of the criminal law in order to save the State from the triumph of anarchy. A season of absolute panic set in and the most trivial political disturbance arising in any part of the country was magnified into another attempt of the emissaries of revolution to upset the Throne, pull down the Church, and turn the State into the republic of a rabble.

It is quite clear now to all readers of history that such attempts as those planned by the Cato Street conspirators can only exist at a time when stern and savage restrictions are set upon all efforts to obtain a free public hearing for

the discussion of political and social grievances. Where political wrongs can be arraigned in the open day, there is no occasion for the work of the midnight conspirator. Already in England public men were coming forward who were filled with the noble and patriotic desire to give the philosophy of history some share in the guidance of political life. Popular education had been totally neglected in England, and, indeed, the too common impression among the ruling classes was that the lower orders of the people could never be kept in due obedience to their superiors if they were permitted to make themselves unfit for their station by learning how to read and write. Even the criminal laws themselves bore terrible testimony to the prevailing ideas, by the fact that property was proclaimed as sacred a possession as life itself.

In the early days of George the Fourth's reign Sir James Mackintosh, the famous historian, philosopher, and philanthropist, brought into the House of Commons a measure for abolishing the punishment of death in cases of the stealing of property to the value of five shillings, and he succeeded in carrying his measure through Parliament. Up to that time men and women had been executed, year after year, for stealing from a shop any goods of the value of five shillings, were the goods but a few loaves of high-priced bread carried off for the purpose of relieving the sufferings of a hungry family. Sir James Mackintosh's measure aimed at the abolition of the death penalty in a large number of other minor offences, but he only succeeded in robbing the gallows of its victims in two other classes of small offences as well as that which has just been mentioned.

At this time of day one reads with amazement the arguments which men like Lord Chancellor Eldon directed against the humane measures introduced by Sir James Mackintosh. Parliament and the country were solemnly warned that if such relaxation of the death punishment were sanctioned by law, the smaller class of tradesmen would have to give up their shops and their business altogether, because it would be utterly impossible for them

to keep any goods in their windows or on their shelves if the punishment of death were not maintained for the theft of a shawl or a snuff-box. At the same time it was well known to everybody who had eyes to see or ears to hear that numbers of shoplifters escaped punishment altogether because humane juries refused, even on the plainest evidence, to find a verdict of guilty where such a verdict would send the prisoner from the dock to the gallows. Many a jury, too, when it was impossible to doubt that a theft had been committed, acted on the ingenious plan of declaring in their verdict that the articles stolen, whatever their obvious market worth, were under the value of five shillings, thereby saving the offender from the doom of death. Thus the repressive power of the law was necessarily diminished by the uncertainty which common humanity put in the way of its regular enforcement, and that very barbarity of punishment which was intended to keep men back from crime by its mere terrors gave to the criminal only another chance of escape.

Sir James Mackintosh had brought in his measures as successor, in that line of philanthropic reform, to the lamented Sir Samuel Romilly, whose melancholy death, already referred to, had created a profound sensation throughout England and abroad towards the close of the late reign. About the time when Mackintosh was thus making his partly successful attempt to put some check on the application of the death penalty, Henry Brougham was arousing the attention of Parliament and the country to the lamentable and disgraceful absence of anything like a system of national education. On June 28, 1820, Brougham brought forward the first definite proposal submitted to the House of Commons for a scheme of national education designed to apply to England and Wales. A parliamentary committee had been sitting for some time to make inquiries and receive evidence as to the state of education in the poorer districts of the land. This, too, was owing almost altogether to the energy and the efforts of Brougham, but the inquiries of the committee were resulting in nothing very practical, and Brougham therefore

went a step further than he had previously gone and brought forward his definite scheme for national education. It is hardly necessary to say that he did not succeed in carrying his measure, and that generations had yet to pass away before any real and comprehensive effort was made by the State to establish such a system of popular education in these countries as had been known to Prussia and other European nations almost for time out of mind. But Brougham had at least started the question, and he never ceased to keep it moving during his long life. Other reformers, too, as well as Mackintosh and Brougham, were making their voices heard above, or at all events through, the din and clamor of the controversy between the friends of the King and the champions of the Queen. Lord John Russell may be said to have then begun his noble career as reformer of the system of parliamentary representation, and Mr. Lambton, afterwards to be better known as Lord Durham, made more than one bold effort in the same direction.

Russell and Lambton were both unsuccessful just then. The time had not yet come when the question of parliamentary reform was to break up ministries, set the country aflame with agitation, and put a thick-witted Sovereign to the necessity of choosing between submission to the popular demand or facing the risk of revolution. But it might have been clear to reflective men that the days of unconditional loyalty to the will of a monarch had nearly run their course in England, and that the demand for a reform in the criminal law, a relaxation of the repression of free speech, the establishment of some system of popular education, and the adoption of a really representative principle in the construction of Parliament was destined before long to prove irresistible. The case of the reformers was emphasized by the widespread agricultural distress from which the country had long been suffering. The inevitable reaction had set in, too, after the spasmodic inflation of trade and commerce which had accompanied the long period of war. Even if the governing system of England had been as wise and humane as it was unen-

lightened and harsh, the condition of the country would, of itself, have favored almost any demand for reform. As the Government system actually was, only a national prosperity of universal and impossible sleekness could have kept the people of England much longer indifferent to the necessity for reform in almost every department of the political and social system.

Meanwhile the new King was paying his round of State visits to Ireland, to Hanover, and to Scotland. We have seen already how the royal progress to Ireland was delayed by the inconvenient occurrence of the Queen's death. George soon, however, felt it proper to put away all affectation of grief, and to pay his visit to Ireland. Great hopes were entertained there for the beneficent results of the royal visit. George had been during his earlier days in political sympathy as well as boon companionship with Fox and with Sheridan. Fox had always shown himself a true friend to Ireland. The Irish national poet, Thomas Moore, had, in one of his songs, described the Banshee as wailing over the grave of him "on whose burning tongue truth, peace, and freedom hung." It was fondly believed in Ireland that the King was returning to the sympathies of his earlier days, and that his coming to the island must bring blessings with it. Daniel O'Connell, the orator and tribune of the Irish people, appears to have been thoroughly impressed with the same hopes and the same conviction, and he brought on himself some satirical lines from Byron in scorn of his credulity and his confidence. We shall soon have occasion to see what return O'Connell got for his loyalty and his devotion.

The last of the great Irish patriots of the past age, Henry Grattan, had been buried in Westminster Abbey the year before George's visit to Ireland. It was well that so pure-minded and austere a lover of his country should have been spared the necessity of taking any part in the ceremonials of welcome which attended the arrival of the new Sovereign in Ireland. George undoubtedly received what seemed to be a thoroughly national welcome, for it was fully believed all through the country that his visit was

to open a new era of peace, prosperity, and well-merited loyalty to Ireland. King George threw himself thoroughly into the spirit of the occasion. He acted his part with admirable effect. He was sympathetic, he was convivial, he was pathetic, he was boisterous, exactly as the theatrical effect of the moment seemed to call for the display of this or that emotion. In truth, the character of George the Fourth never can be thoroughly understood unless we are able to see how much of the artistic, in a certain sense, there was in his temperament. He had that peculiar gift which has lately come to be called "artistic" —sincerely by some critics, satirically by others—the gift which enables a man to throw his whole soul and spirit into any part which the occasion calls on him to act. George was almost always playing a part, but it was his artistic temperament which enabled him to believe that he actually felt at the moment the very emotions which he tried to express. The favorite dramatic type of the conscious hypocrite and the deliberate self-recognized deceiver is much less common in real life than it was believed to be at one period of our literary history. We may take it for granted that George fully believed himself to be acting with perfect sincerity on most of the occasions in his life when he had to utter eloquent sentiments appropriate to the scene and the hour, or to fling himself into the different humors of those whom, at different times, he was anxious to please.

During his public performances—for thus they may properly be called—in Ireland, George was sometimes grave, sometimes gay; shed tears in some places, indulged in touches of buffoonery in others; and wherever he went seemed to be giving to those around him only the most sincere outpouring of his own humor and of his own heart. He appears thoroughly to have enjoyed his popularity, and to have regarded himself, for the hour, as the justly idolized hero of the land which he had come to redeem and to bless. The harbor where he first landed in Ireland, which was called Dunleary then, has been called Kingstown ever since, for its name was changed in honor of the monarch's

visit to his Irish subjects. The tourist who has just arrived at Kingstown by the steamer from Holyhead, and who takes his seat in the train for Dublin, may see from the window of the railway carriage an obelisk, not very imposing either in its height or in its sculptured form, which seems a little out of place amid the ordinary accessories of a railway and steamboat station. This is the monument which the grateful authorities of the Irish capital erected to commemorate the spot on which George the Fourth had set his august feet when he landed on the shores of Ireland. Except for the obelisk and the change of name there was not much done to keep the memory of the King green in the recollections of the Irish people.

On August 12 George landed at Dunleary, where anxious and enthusiastic crowds had long been waiting to welcome him. He was received with universal cries of "The King! God bless him!" to which he replied by waving the foraging-cap which he had been wearing, and crying out, "God bless you all; I thank you from my heart." Then he got into his carriage, and with a cavalcade of his attendants and a concourse of admiring followers he drove to the Viceregal Lodge in Phœnix Park, some eight or nine miles' distance. When he arrived at the Lodge he alighted from the carriage and proclaimed to the crowd, "In addressing you I conceive that I am addressing the nobility, gentry, and yeomen of Ireland. This is one of the happiest moments of my life. I feel pleased being the first of my family that set foot on Irish ground. Early in my life I loved Ireland, and I rejoice at being among my beloved Irish friends. I always considered them such, and this day proves to me I am beloved by them." Then he went on to say that "circumstances of a delicate nature," to which it was needless to advert, had prevented him from visiting them earlier. Rank, station, and honor were nothing to him, but "to feel that I live in the hearts of my Irish subjects is to me the most exalted happiness." He wound up with the touching words, "I assure you, my dear friends, I have an Irish heart, and will this night give a proof of my affection towards you, as I am sure you will towards

me, by drinking your health in a bumper of whiskey punch."

This speech may be taken as the keynote of George's behavior throughout the entire visit. On the 17th of the month he made his grand state entrance into Dublin in an open carriage drawn by eight horses, and he wore in his hat an enormous bunch of shamrocks, to which, by repeated gestures, he kept incessantly calling the attention of the crowd. More than once as he gazed upon his admiring followers he was observed to shed tears. Afterwards he attended reviews, showed himself at the theatre, was present at a great ball at the Mansion House, received an entertainment at Trinity College, and visited the residences of some of the Irish nobility. He talked to everybody, and sometimes in his conversation showed much of the good sense and shrewdness which really belonged to him, but in his demeanor towards the general multitude he always enacted the part of an enthusiastic Sovereign whose enthusiasm sometimes showed itself in the form of what might have been called, if he were not a Sovereign, outrageous mountebankery. On Monday, September 3, he quitted the shores of Ireland. Just before his departure he received a deputation headed by Daniel O'Connell, who fell upon his knees, and in that attitude of loyal devotion presented his Majesty with a laurel crown. The King was particularly gracious to O'Connell, shook him warmly by the hand, and accepted gratefully the gift offered to him, and, for the time, O'Connell divided the applause of the crowd with the monarch. There was a renewed interchange of good wishes and blessings, and then the King got into his barge to be conveyed to the steamer, and several loyal Irishmen, in their enthusiasm, rushing to see the last of him, tumbled into the sea, and with some difficulty rescued themselves, or were rescued, from drowning.

This may be said to have ended the royal visit so far as history is concerned, for, although the King's return to England was delayed for several days by contrary winds, he had nothing more to do with his Irish subjects. Byron

wrote some satirical verses, which he prefaced with the words of Curran, the great Irish advocate and orator, describing Ireland like "a bastinadoed elephant kneeling to receive the paltry rider," and in which he made mockery of O'Connell's loyalty, paid a just and generous tribute to Grattan, and proclaimed sincerely his own love for Ireland and his thorough appreciation of her national cause. Then the royal visit was over, and the Irish people were soon to learn the value of the King's profession of sympathy with the wishes and the wants of his devoted Irish subjects. A curious illustration of the sincerity of these royal sentiments may be found in a letter written by the King not very long after to his Prime Minister, Lord Liverpool, and marked "Most secret and confidential." The letter had reference to the appointment of a new occupant to the exalted office of Primate of All Ireland, and the King says, "I do not like, I cannot reconcile myself to have the Primacy of Ireland filled by an Irishman." The King, when writing this letter, appears to have been in one of his deeply religious moods. "I am too far advanced in life," he says, "not to give subjects of this description the most serious and attentive consideration. It is, alas! but too true that policy is too often obliged to interfere with our best intentions, but I do think where the head of the Church is concerned, especially at such a moment, we ought alone to be influenced by religious duty. Do not be surprised at this scrupulous language, for I am quite sincere." Very likely King George was quite sincere in this momentary burst of religious emotion. It was a part of his artistic nature to be able thus to fill himself with any emotion which helped out the performance he had in hand; but it is at least an odd comment on his recent emotions of love for the Irish people and absolute trust in their loyal devotion, that he could not reconcile himself to the idea of allowing any Irishman to occupy the position of Primate of All Ireland. There was no question in this of Protestant against Roman Catholic, and that Coronation Oath, which had in the former reign proved so formidable an obstacle to the recognition of any Catholic

claims, was in no wise brought into question. Nobody suggested that a Roman Catholic bishop should be made Primate of All Ireland, but it was strange that soon after George's reiterated professions of love for his Irish people, and absolute trust in them, he could not reconcile himself to the idea of any Protestant bishop, however meritorious, being raised to such an office if the Protestant bishop happened to be an Irishman.

King George had to leave his capital again in order to visit other lands where he had subjects to gratify with the pleasure of his presence. He paid a visit to Hanover, and then to Scotland. George, it need hardly be said, was King of Hanover as well as of England, and he thought it right that he should illumine the Hanoverians with the light of his royal countenance. So he made his way to Hanover, taking Brussels in his course. He was accompanied thus far by the Duke of Wellington and other eminent persons, and he took the opportunity of surveying the field of Waterloo, and having all the striking points of the battle-field pointed out and explained to him by the Duke of Wellington. It would appear that the sovereign's personal survey of the field on which Napoleon's last great battle had been fought only served to strengthen the impression on his mind that he had himself taken a part, and even a distinguished and heroic part, in that immortal struggle. Here again the artistic nature asserted itself. No doubt it had long seemed to George that the heir to the English throne ought to have taken a leading part in a battle which was a turning-point in the history of England, and by degrees he had contrived to persuade himself into the belief that he had actually done the deeds required by the dramatic fitness of things, for it was well known that, at certain seasons of inspiration, he had described himself as leading a desperate charge at Waterloo. Then he pursued his way to Hanover, and he made much the same demonstrations of deep emotion as those which had delighted the crowds at Dunleary and in Dublin. Again and again he protested his love and his devotion for his Hanoverian subjects, again and again he accompanied

with voice and with gesture the singing of patriotic hymns, and on more than one occasion the royal eyes were seen to be streaming over with sympathetic tears.

All this, however, did not prevent him from sometimes making it known to the more intimate companions of his journey that he was greatly bored by the Germans in general, and that he was particularly disgusted with the Hanoverians. George had always some chosen favorite holding important personal office in his courtly retinue, and to him, in moments of relaxation, he occasionally let out his real feelings with regard to the ceremonial performances which he believed it his duty to get through. Then he visited Scotland, and was welcomed by enthusiastic crowds at Leith and in Edinburgh. While he was still on board the royal vessel at Leith he was waited on by several distinguished representatives of Scottish feeling, and among others by no less a personage than Sir Walter Scott. George was very gracious in his reception of the great novelist, and assured Sir Walter that he was the one man in Scotland whom he most wished to see. As had been the fashion during his visit to Ireland, there was a good deal of spirit-drinking when the King came to testify his gratitude for the loyal welcome given to him by his Scottish subjects. His Majesty poured out with his own hand some cherry brandy into a glass, which he tendered to Sir Walter Scott, and Sir Walter not merely drank off the liquid thus commended to him, but asked permission to keep the glass as a perpetual relic of the royal giver and of the august occasion. Thackeray tells the story of the incident in his lecture on George the Fourth, and we cannot do better than describe it in his own words: "When George the Fourth came to Edinburgh," says Thackeray, "a better man than he went on board the royal yacht to welcome the King to his kingdom of Scotland, seized a goblet from which his Majesty had just drunk, vowed it should remain forever as an heirloom in his family, clapped the precious glass in his pocket, and sat down on it and broke it when he got home." One can easily imagine how the sudden fate of the precious relic must have amused

and delighted the satirical genius of Thackeray, who could not quite forgive even Sir Walter Scott for having lent himself to the fulsome adulation which it was thought proper to offer to George the Fourth on the occasion of his visit to his kingdom of Scotland.

Thackeray, indeed, seems to have been a little too hard upon George, and to have regarded him merely as a worthless profligate and buffoon, who never really felt any of the generous emotions which the sovereign found it convenient to summon up at the appropriate seasons. Our own study of the character leads us to the opinion already expressed, that George did actually believe for the time in the full sincerity of the feelings he thought proper to call into action on the occasion of an important ceremonial, and that the feelings were no less genuine at the moment than those which came on him when the performance was over, and he had an opportunity of showing the new state of his mind in the reaction of weariness caused by the whole tiresome proceedings. George went through the usual rounds of visits in Scotland, and put on an appearance of absolute enjoyment during the public entertainments and popular acclamations which he had brought upon himself. He displayed himself frequently in a suit of Stuart tartan when he did not array himself in his costume as a field-marshal. We read that during the singing of royal songs he not only beat time to the chorus, but actually accompanied it with his voice. His parting words when he was leaving the shores of Scotland were the deep-toned and thrilling benediction, "God bless you all!" The loyal chroniclers of the time proclaimed that the visit to Scotland was a perfect success, and if the loyal chroniclers at the time were not in a position to know, how can we of a later date, who had not the advantage of being present at the scene, or even of being alive at the time, pretend to dispute the accuracy of their estimate?

CHAPTER LXV.

GEORGE CANNING.

We have seen how the course of the proceedings taken against the Queen deprived the Liverpool Ministry of the services of its most brilliant member, George Canning. Canning had made up his mind from the beginning that he could not appear as one of the Queen's accusers, although he had consented, as a compromise, to the omission of her name from the Royal Liturgy. He had consented to this compromise because, although he did not believe in the worst of the charges against the Queen, he could not help admitting that there was much in her conduct which rendered her unsuitable as the reigning consort of the King; and at the time he did not understand that the King's disapproval of her actions was to take the form of a prosecution and a demand for divorce. He had applied to the King for leave to resign his office in the Ministry, and had only been induced to remain on the understanding that he was not expected to take any part in the public proceedings against the unhappy Caroline. When, however, it became evident that the whole question would be raised in the House of Commons, and that he must either give a silent assent to the course taken by the King's advisers or publicly condemn it there, he felt it his duty to send in his resignation of his place in the Ministry and to stand by his resolve. Canning withdrew from office and became, for the time, merely a private member of the House of Commons. King George got it into his mind that his former minister had deserted his cause at an anxious and critical moment, and the King, who was flighty enough in most of his purposes, seldom forgot what he regarded as an injury. He never forgave Canning,

although the time was now coming when hardly any choice was left him but to take Canning back into his service again, and under conditions that gave Canning a greater influence over public affairs than he had ever had before.

After the group of illustrious men, which included the elder and the younger Pitt, Fox, Burke, and Sheridan, had disappeared from English public life, Canning was through the whole of his career the greatest Parliamentary orator and leader in England. Up to the time at which we have now arrived, he had not yet won his highest reputation as a statesman. He was born under conditions which might have been depressing and disheartening to one of different mould. His father was a man of old family and well connected, who had in his earlier years developed some taste for literature, and was regarded by most of his relatives as one who merely brought discredit on his kindred by his mean ambition to devote himself to the profession of letters. The elder Canning does not seem, however, to have had a capacity for making a real success in that way, and, indeed, it would appear as if he had too much of the often fatal gift of the amateur in his composition to allow him to concentrate his energies on any one pursuit. He sought for success in various fields and never found it, and he died soon after his son, George Canning, was born. The mother of the future statesman was thus left a widow while she was still young, and, as she had great beauty and believed that she had a vocation for the stage, she did her best to make a living for herself and her child by becoming a professional actress. She was not much of an actress, however, and, being unable to make any mark in London, she passed for a time into the provinces, and at last married an actor and disappeared from historical notice.

Meanwhile, the education of George Canning the son had been provided for by his uncle, a wealthy merchant and banker, Stratford Canning, whose son was afterwards famous as Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, the "great Elchi" of Kinglake. This uncle seemed anxious to make reparation for the manner in which his dead brother had been

treated by the family in general. The young Canning was sent to Eton and to Oxford, and began to study for the bar, but he displayed such distinct talents for literature and for politics that there seemed little likelihood of his devoting himself to the business of law. He soon became known at Oxford as a charming poet, a keen and brilliant satirist, and a public speaker endowed with a voice of marvellous intonation and an exquisite choice of words. He made the acquaintance of Sheridan and of Burke; by Burke he was introduced to Pitt, and by Sheridan to Fox, and it is believed to have been on the suggestion of Pitt that he resolved to devote himself to a Parliamentary career. He married a woman who had a large fortune, and he obtained a seat in the House of Commons. In that House he remained silent for a whole session after his election, and devoted himself to a close study of the rules, the usages, and the manners of the representative chamber, In those far-off days it was considered becoming on the part of a young member of the House to observe a modest silence for a great part of his first session, and to make himself familiar with the assembly before he ventured on any public display of his eloquence. The time had not yet come when it was considered humanly possible for a member of Parliament to make his first speech on the very day of his first introduction to the House of Commons.

Canning's first speech was a distinct success. He was thought by some critics to have imitated too closely the magnificent rhetorical style of Burke, but the exquisite voice and the noble elocution of Canning were all his own and certainly could not have been improved by any imitation of the voice and manner of Burke. Many of Canning's friends took it for granted that the young member would ally himself with the Whig Opposition, but Canning at once presented himself as the devoted follower of Pitt. Canning was afterwards the foremost among the creators of the *Anti-Jacobin*, a famous satirical periodical set up to throw ridicule on the principles and sentiments of the French Revolution, and of all those who encouraged its levelling theories or who aped its exalted professions of

humanity and of universal brotherhood. Canning made his way rapidly in public life, and became an Under-Secretary of State three years after his election to the House of Commons. His next appointment was that of Treasurer to the Navy, and in 1807 he became Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. A quarrel began between him and Lord Castlereagh, one of his colleagues, arising out of the unfortunate Walcheren expedition, and the quarrel resulted in a duel, after the fashion of the day, in which Canning received a wound.

The policy of Castlereagh made as strong a contrast with the policy of Canning as even the contrast which was brought under the notice of every listener by the Parliamentary speeches of the two men. Canning was master of a polished eloquence which, at the time, had no rival in either House of Parliament. Castlereagh was one of the most singular and striking illustrations of the fact that a man may sometimes become a power in the House of Commons without the slightest gift of eloquence. Canning was a master of phrase, tone, and gesture. Castlereagh's language was commonplace, uncouth, and sometimes even ridiculous, and it happened only too often that in his anxiety to get his words out he became positively inarticulate. His policy represented the ideas of the Holy Alliance in their narrowest and most reactionary meaning; while Canning, although entirely opposed to the principles of mere revolution, had an utter contempt for the notion that a conclave of European sovereigns could lay down limits and laws for the growth and the government of all the European nationalities. The policy of Castlereagh has long since ceased to have any believers even among the advisers of autocratic sovereigns, while the policy of Canning is the recognized creed of statesmanship all over the civilized world.

Canning resigned his office as Foreign Secretary in 1809, and was for a short time sent on a special embassy to the Court of Lisbon. Then he became President of the Board of Control, which may be said to have divided at that time the management of our Indian possessions with the East

India Company, and he held this important office for about four years. Meanwhile he had resigned his seat for Newport, in the Isle of Wight, and had been elected as representative of the great and growing port of Liverpool in the House of Commons. The visitor to Liverpool at the present day can hardly go far through the great city without meeting some memorial of the veneration in which the illustrious name of Canning is held by the dwellers on the Mersey. A vacancy arose in the office of Governor-General of India, and the directors of the East India Company invited Canning to accept the splendid and commanding position. Canning at once made up his mind to close with the offer. The position would in many ways have suited his genius, his deep interest in the government of states, and the freshness of his ideas on all subjects connected with the growth of the Empire. Moreover, he knew that he had offended the King, and that George was not a man likely to forgive such an offence, and he thought he had reason to believe that, for the present at least, there was not much prospect for him of advancement in English political life. Many of his friends endeavored to persuade him against accepting a position which would make him an exile from England at a time when England's interests on the European continent required just such a genius as his to guide her foreign policy, and they felt sure that the time could not be far distant when he must be invited to resume his former place in the Administration. Canning, however, held to his purpose, accepted the offer of the East India Company, and went to Liverpool in order to take farewell of his constituency before setting out on his voyage to the scene of his new duties.

He stayed while in Liverpool at Seaforth House, the residence of Mr. John Gladstone, one of the merchant princes of Liverpool, whose son William Ewart Gladstone was afterwards to make the name of the family famous in history. During his stay at Seaforth House, Canning used to spend much of his time gazing out upon the sea, while the little boy William Ewart Gladstone played on the lawn near him. It was here that Canning heard the news

which led to an entire change in his purpose, and opened the way to his greatest success. His late colleague, his late rival, Castlereagh, was dead—had died by his own hand. Castlereagh had lately succeeded to his father's title, and had become Marquis of Londonderry; but as the marquisate was only an Irish peerage, he could still sit in the House of Commons as the chosen representative of an English constituency. His mind had seemed, for some time, to be darkened by troubles of which he gave no account to his friends, and he suddenly committed suicide. There are many conjectures and suggested explanations as to the immediate cause of the act, but all we know for certain is that the strong mind seemed suddenly to give way, and that Castlereagh could endure life no longer. Seldom, indeed, has the death of a public man in modern times been received with any such demonstrations as those which in many places followed the news that Castlereagh had done himself to death. In every community all over the country, and indeed all over Europe and the civilized world, there were those who proclaimed that the death of such a man was a positive blessing to the human race. Wherever men were struggling against despotism and suffering from tyranny, there were those who felt and who declared that the departure of Castlereagh from this world was a benefit to humanity at large.

Yet the man himself had not a cruel or an ignoble nature. He had through all his life friends who loved him, and whose love his private character and conduct had well deserved. But he had made himself the English representative of the policy of the Holy Alliance at a time when every lover of liberty, and every believer in the development of free institutions and the beneficent results of their working, must have felt that even the excesses of the French Revolution gave no excuse for the deliberate setting-up of the doctrine of combined despotism. Men of liberal opinions were in an especially angry mood just then because England seemed to have gone in deliberately for the policy which authorized the "crowned conspirators," as Sydney Smith called them, to impose their edicts

on the whole continent of Europe. This condition of things may help to explain the cry of rejoicing with which the news of Castlereagh's suicide was received in so many places. The London crowd who followed the funeral procession to Westminster Abbey greeted the removal of the coffin with yells of execration. Byron wrote verses of savage bitterness about the dead man and his deed of self-murder—wrote some verses which no English publisher now would put into print.

The death of Castlereagh became a turning-point in the career of Canning. The whole voice of Liberal public opinion at once proclaimed that Canning was the only man left in the country who was capable of redeeming England's foreign policy from the discredit and disgrace brought upon it by Castlereagh's Administration. Even Lord Liverpool himself soon came to see that there was no other course left to him than to recommend the King to offer to Canning the place of Foreign Secretary. The King at first fought hard against the advice of his Prime Minister. The letters which passed between him and Lord Liverpool are a curiosity in their way. George had evidently persuaded himself that Canning was a monster of ingratitude, who had committed a positively unpardonable offence against his lord and master. Indeed, it was only by playing upon the King's personal vanity that Lord Liverpool at last brought him to accept the wholesome advice tendered to him. Lord Liverpool reminded George again and again that one of the noblest of a monarch's prerogatives was his power to grant forgiveness to any repentant sinner. George was probably beginning to be weary of the discussion, and perhaps had natural shrewdness enough to see that it could only end in one way. He therefore seemed to be taken by the appeal made to his generosity for pardon to a penitent offender, and he consented to make approaches to Canning with regard to the office of Foreign Secretary. At first, however, the King made so ostentatious a profession of his magnanimous desire to pardon the remorseful wrong-doer that Canning could not bring himself to accept the abject position which

his sovereign was arranging for him. He therefore declined at first to take any office under such conditions, and the King had to come down from his high horse and treat with his subject in less arrogant fashion. The King, at last, so far modified his language as to leave the prerogative of mercy out of the question, and Canning, by the advice of all his friends and supporters, consented to become once more a member of the Administration and to undertake the duties of Foreign Secretary.

This, we have said, was the turning-point in the career of Canning. It was also a turning-point in the modern history of England. The violence of the reaction against the principles of the French Revolution had spent itself, and the public mind of this country was beginning to see that the turbulence of democracy was not likely to be safely dealt with by the setting-up of despotism. Canning himself was a living illustration of the manner in which many great intellects had been affected by the course of events between the fall of Napoleon and the death of Castlereagh. Canning in his earlier days was in sympathy with the theories and doctrines of popular liberty, and we have seen that up to the time of his actually entering Parliament it was generally believed he would rank himself with the Whig Opposition. But, like many other men who loved liberty too, he had been alarmed by the aggressive policy of Napoleon, and he believed that the position of England was best guaranteed by the later policy of Pitt. Then came the Congress of Vienna, and the deliberate attempt to reconstruct the map of continental Europe, and to decree the destinies of nations according to the despotic principles of the Holy Alliance.

Canning soon recognized the fact, obvious enough, one might have thought, even to a man of intellect far lower than that of Canning, that the traditions, the instincts, and the feelings of a people must count for something in the form and manner of their government, and that there are forces at work in the hearts and minds of peoples which can no more be governed by imperial and royal decrees than can the forces of physical nature itself. He

had unconsciously anticipated in his own mind that doctrine of nationalities which afterwards came to play so momentous and so clearly recognized a part in the politics of the world. He saw how the policy of Castlereagh had made England the recognized ally of all the old-world theories of divine right and unconditional loyalty, and had made her a fellow-worker with the sovereigns of the Holy Alliance for the restoration of tyranny all over the European continent. He understood the nature and the meaning of the new forces which were coming up in political life; he saw that the French Revolution was not destined to end in the mere restoration of mediæval despotism. He saw that the American Revolution had opened a new chapter in the history of the modern world, and that no man, whether he called himself Tory or Whig, was fit to be intrusted with the administration of England's foreign policy who had not learned the lessons taught by the closing years of the eighteenth and the opening years of the nineteenth century. Canning had much of that imaginative faculty without which there can hardly be any real statesmanship. Even his gift of humor helped him in this way. He was able to understand the feelings, the tempers, and the conditions of men with whom he had little opportunity of personal contact. He could bring himself into sympathy with the aspirations of peoples who were wholly foreign in race to him, and who would have been mere foreigners and nothing else in the eyes of many of his political colleagues.

If Lord Londonderry had lived and had continued, as no doubt he would have done, to hold the Foreign Office, he would have been England's representative at the Congress of Verona. The new chances opened by his death inspired that demand for the services of Canning which compelled the King at last to yield and invite Canning back to his old place. The Congress of Verona was in fact a reassembling of the Holy Alliance for the purpose of taking once more into consideration the disturbed state of Europe, and laying down once more the lines of the only policy which, according to the judgment of the despotic

sovereigns and their ministers, could restore peace to the Continent. The disturbances arose simply from the fact that some of the European populations were rising up against the policy of the Holy Alliance, and were agitating for the principles of constitutional government. The immediate and ostensible object for the summoning of the Congress was the fact that Greece had been trying to throw off the yoke of Turkey, and that the leading members of the Holy Alliance believed it was their business and their right to say what was to be done with Greece, and whether or not it was for their convenience that she should be held in perpetual bondage.

But there were troubles also in Spain, because the Spanish sovereign had been giving way to the desire of his people for a system of constitutional government and for the recognition of the principle that a people has something to do with the making as well as with the obeying of laws. The restored Bourbon Government in France declared that it saw dangers to its own rights and its own security in these concessions to popular demand, made in a country which was only divided from French territory by the barrier of the Pyrenees. It was intimated in the clearest manner that the Bourbon Government of France would be prepared, if necessary, to undertake armed intervention in the affairs of Spain in order to prevent the Spaniards from thus setting a bad example to the subjects of the Bourbon dynasty. Then the condition of Poland was giving some alarm to the despotic monarchs of the Continent everywhere; for, if Poland were to rise and were allowed to assert its liberty, who could tell on what soil, sacred to despotism, other rebellious movements might not also break out. Therefore, the monarchs of the Holy Alliance were much perturbed, and came to the conclusion that, as the Congress of Vienna had not succeeded in enforcing all its edicts, the only wise thing would be to call together another Congress, to be held this time at Verona, and there go over all the work again with greater vigor and determination.

Now it was unavoidable that England should be invited

to take part in this Congress, seeing that, but for the assistance given by England, there would never have been a chance for even the Congress of Vienna to make any attempt at the regulation of Europe. Besides, it was well known that Lord Londonderry had been a main instrument in the formation and execution of the plans laid down by the Congress of Vienna, and although England, on that occasion, had not been able to go quite as far as her allies would have wished her to accompany them, yet it was not thought possible to leave England without an invitation to be represented at the Congress of Verona. On the death of Lord Londonderry it was resolved by the English Government to send the Duke of Wellington to Verona. The Duke had never professed any particular ideas of his own with regard to foreign policy, but he was the most loyal of men in obeying the instructions of those who were properly authorized to direct his movements, and in whom he could place his confidence. When Canning consented to accept office the Duke at once put himself into communication with the new Foreign Secretary, and wrote to him from Paris informing Canning of his belief that the Spanish question would be brought, in some shape or other, under the consideration of the Congress, and asking Canning for instructions as to the course which he ought to adopt. Canning despatched a reply to the Duke, one passage of which may be regarded as a full illustration of the new principle which he had determined to establish in England's foreign policy. The words of the great statesman cannot be read with too close an attention. Canning declares that, "If there be a determined project to interfere by force or by menace in the present struggle in Spain, so convinced are his Majesty's Government of the uselessness and danger of any such interference, so objectionable does it appear to them in principle as well as in practical execution, that when the necessity arises—or, I would rather say, when the opportunity offers—I am to instruct your Grace at once frankly and peremptorily to declare that to any such interference, come what may, his Majesty will not be a party."

The Duke of Wellington faithfully obeyed the instructions which had been given to him. He made it clear to the Congress of Verona that England would not sanction any project for the interference of foreign sovereigns with the domestic affairs of Spain. When the Duke found that his arguments and his remonstrances were of no avail, he withdrew from the Congress altogether and left the members of the Holy Alliance to take on themselves the full responsibility of their own policy. Now it would be hardly possible to overrate the importance of the step thus taken by England at a great crisis in the public affairs of Europe. The reign of George the Fourth would be memorable in history if it had been consecrated by nothing but this event. The utter disruption between the old state policy and the new was proclaimed by the instructions which Canning sent to the Duke of Wellington, and which were faithfully carried out by the Duke. No English Government has, in later days, ventured to profess openly any other foreign policy than that announced by Canning. Other ministers in later times may have attempted, now and then, to swerve from it in this direction and in that, and to cover their evasion of it by specious pleas, but the new doctrine set up by Canning has never since his time found avowed apostates among English statesmen. It would have been well if such a principle could have inspired the foreign policy of England in the days when the French Revolution broke out, and if England had then proclaimed that she would be no party to any attempt made by foreign States to prevent the people of France from settling their own systems of government for themselves. Europe might have been saved a series of disastrous wars. France might have been relieved from counter-revolutions, seasons of anarchy, and seasons of military despotism. England might long have had friendly neighbors where even yet she has perhaps only concealed enemies.

The designs of the Holy Alliance soon made themselves manifest. The French Government had brought so much pressure to bear on the feeble King of Spain that he revoked the Constitution which, at a better moment, he had

granted to his people. There was an attempt at revolution in Spain, and the attempt was put down by the strong hand with the assistance of France, and the leading rebels were at once conducted to the scaffold. Portugal still kept those free institutions which England had enabled her to preserve, and still retained her sympathy with freedom. Canning soon saw that a part of the policy of the French Government was to bring Portugal also into subjection, and against this danger he provided by a bold announcement of policy. He declared in the House of Commons that if Portugal were, of her own accord, to engage herself in a war with France, the English Government would not feel bound to take any active part in the struggle, but that if the King of Spain were to accept or call in the assistance of the King of France to suppress Portugal, the Government of England would put its armies into the field to maintain its ancient ally. Then there arose a great question concerning the Spanish colonies and possessions across the Atlantic. The policy of France was to enable Spain to reconquer some of her American colonies which had long been withdrawing themselves from their condition of subjection, and the scheme of French statesmen evidently was that Spain would hand over some of her American possessions as a tribute of gratitude to France for the services she had rendered to the cause of absolutism in Spain.

On this question, too, Canning announced to the House of Commons a determination on the part of the English Government which put an effectual stop to this audacious policy. Canning declared that, although Spain had long since lost any real control over her transatlantic colonies, yet if she were to attempt their actual reconquest for herself England, however little in sympathy with such a purpose, might not feel that it was any part of her business to interfere by force of arms. But he went on to tell the House that, if Spain should claim the right to hand over any of those colonies to France as a part of the policy arranged between France and Spain, the English Government would then intervene directly and at once on behalf

of the Spanish-American colonies. This was the course of action which Canning described to the House of Commons in an immortal phrase when he told the House "that he had called in the New World to redress the balance of the Old." No words employed by an English minister during the last century have been more often quoted, and none have ever more thoroughly justified themselves in history. The schemes of the French and the Spanish Bourbons were blighted in the bud by Canning's memorable declaration.

Canning had indeed called in the New World to redress the balance of the Old in a sense more complete than the accepted meaning of his words, at the time, appeared to signify. He had secured for his policy the moral co-operation of the New World's greatest power—the Republic of the United States. It was on the inspiration of Canning that the President of the United States embodied in a message to Congress that declaration of principle which has ever since been known as the Monroe doctrine. President Monroe, who knew well that he was proclaiming no doctrine which his influence and his authority with his country would not enable him to carry out, made known to Congress that it was his intention to warn European sovereigns against the danger of setting up their systems in any part of the New World. The United States, according to President Monroe's declaration, had no idea of interfering with existing systems, but if European sovereigns were to set up governments of their own on any other part of the American continents and against the wishes of the populations, the United States must regard any such attempt as a menace and a danger to the American Republic. This is in substance the meaning of that Monroe doctrine which has often been criticised unfairly or ignorantly on this side of the Atlantic, and its proclamation was undoubtedly due, at the time, to the advice which came from George Canning. President Monroe never meant to say that the Government of the United States had any idea of interfering with British North America or with the Empire of Brazil. The Ca-

College of the Pacific
Stockton, Calif.

nadian provinces of Great Britain were, of course, perfectly free to remain a loyal part of the British Empire so long as it suited the interests and the inclinations of the Canadians. If the people of Brazil chose to be governed by an emperor, the United States Government did not assert any right to interfere with their choice. But what the Monroe doctrine did declare was that if any foreign sovereigns attempted to bring liberated American colonies again under their sway, or to set up by force new subject colonies on American shores against the wishes of the populations concerned, the United States must regard such action as a menace and a danger to the American Republic, and must not be expected to look quietly on without any attempt at intervention. This was, in the truest sense, the announcement of a policy of peace, for it frankly made known to the despotic rulers of the Old World what their risk must be if they ventured on the futile experiment of setting up despotic states on the shores of the New World.

It would have been well indeed if European monarchs at a later day had always remembered the warning and rightly estimated its weight. It would have been well for Louis Napoleon if at the zenith of his imperial success he had studied that message of President Monroe and properly interpreted its meaning. Such a course would have prevented him from making his ill-starred attempt to set up a Mexican Empire by the force of French arms on the ruins of a subjugated Mexican Republic. It would have saved him from defeat and disaster, and would have saved the unhappy, ill-advised, and gallant Maximilian, his puppet emperor, from a tragic fate. The attempt to retrieve the disgrace of his enforced withdrawal from Mexico led Louis Napoleon into that policy of the desperate gambler's last throw which ended in the occupation of Paris and the fall of the Second Empire.

Meanwhile the policy of Canning had accomplished its purpose. The Congress of Verona had been an idle piece of business, the sovereigns of the Holy Alliance had found that their day was done, and the New World had been successfully called in to redress the balance of the Old.

CHAPTER LXVI.

THE CLOSE OF CANNING'S CAREER.

THE King was at first disposed to show some alarm at the bold policy of Canning. George, to do him justice, was in general a lover of peace, and for a while he did not see how the declarations of his Foreign Minister could lead to anything less than an outbreak of war on the part of the Continental sovereigns, who thus seemed to be challenged to assert what they believed to be their rights. His doubt and dread took the form of more or less concealed grumblings against Canning, and efforts to induce his other ministers to make a common cause with him against the adventurous Foreign Minister. Canning, however, saw that the crisis which he had to face was one which makes a bold and resolute policy, frankly avowed on the part of a strong Government, the best or the only means of securing peace. He was able, after a while, to impress his royal master with the justice of his belief, and the King graciously received the envoy accredited to his Court on behalf of one of the new American Republics. Then the rest of the work went on smoothly, the lines of the new policy were laid down, and the sovereigns of the Holy Alliance did not venture to transgress them.

The King was, at all times, much in the habit of attempting to make encroachments on the proper domain of any minister who had the courage and the strength to oppose him, and Canning had to endure a good deal of interference of this kind. The Foreign Minister patiently and steadfastly held his own, and George did not see his way to come to any open rupture. The King found it hard to make up his mind to settle down to the part of a purely constitutional sovereign. Perhaps the part had not yet

been clearly enough evolved from the conditions of the time, and George, even when he had the best intentions, was always lapsing back into the way of his predecessors. George was a great letter-writer. To adopt a modern phrase, he "fancied himself" as a composer of State papers. It seems marvellous now that a man so lazy by nature should have found the time to pen so many documents of the kind. Perhaps even in the most commonplace ways of life we are often compelled to wonder at the amount of work a man habitually lazy can sometimes contrive to cram into his day's doings. George was now as much addicted to indolence, to mere amusement, and to pleasures as he had been during earlier seasons of his career. He was just as fond of the society of his intimates and of all the pastimes and social enjoyments in which he and they delighted. He had not reformed any of his habits, and his growing years did not bring him any steady resolve to apply himself to the actual business of his position. Yet he seemed to be frequently inspired by fitful desires to display himself as the genuine ruler of a State and to let his ministers know they must not attempt to do without him.

One of the King's prime favorites was Sir William Knighton, who had begun by being a physician, had made his way into Court circles, and become the private and confidential adviser of the King. Sir William Knighton had been appointed to the office of Keeper of the Royal Purse, and in that capacity he had rendered much service to George by endeavoring with skill and pertinacity to keep income and expenditure on something more nearly approaching to a balance than had been the way in former days. Knighton's was not exactly a State office and it gave him no position among ministers, but the King constantly used him as a go-between when he desired to have private dealings with any of his recognized advisers, and Knighton was the recipient of his most confidential communications. From the letters and memoranda which belong to this time we are enabled to learn much of the real feelings of King George towards some of his ministers, and to under-

stand the difficulties with which Canning had to deal while endeavoring to make his enlightened policy the accepted and recognized policy of England.

The condition of Greece began to be a serious trouble to the statesmen of Europe. Greece was under the sway of the Sultan of Turkey, and its people may fairly be described as in a state of chronic insurrection. The Greeks, even in their lowest degree of national decadence, were far too intelligent, too ready-witted, and too persevering ever to become the mere slaves of an Ottoman ruler. There was something inextinguishable in the national life of the country, and it seemed as if no pressure of tyranny, no amount of humiliation, could make the Greeks forget the history of their glorious days and the deeds of their ancestry, or compel them to stifle, even for a season, their hopes of national independence. A great struggle broke out against the Ottoman rule, and it roused the passionate sympathy of the lovers of freedom all over the world. Byron threw his whole soul into the cause, and stirred the hearts of his countrymen by his appeals on behalf of the Greek struggle for independence. Numbers of brave Englishmen gladly risked their lives to help the Greeks. Lord Cochrane, who was afterwards described as the last of the English sea-kings, rushed over to Greece to give his genius and his daring to the help of the Greeks in their struggle against overwhelming odds. A speech of Lord John Russell's which he delivered in the House of Commons within the hearing of living men described with admirable effect the enthusiasm which was aroused in England for the cause of Greece and the efforts which were openly made even by members of the ruling class to raise money and to send out soldiers and sailors to enable the Greeks to hold their own against the Ottoman enemy. Many Englishmen bearing historic names joined with Byron and Cochrane in giving their personal help to the struggling Greeks, and indeed from every civilized country in the world such volunteers poured in to stand by Bozzaris and Kanaris in their desperate fight for the rescue of Greece. The odds, however, were heavily against the Greeks. Their

supply of arms, ammunition, and general commissariat for the field was poor and inadequate, and they were sadly wanting in drill and organization. Splendid feats of bravery were displayed on land and on sea, but it seemed only too certain that if the Greeks were left to their own resources, or even if they were not sustained by the open support of some great foreign State, the Ottoman Power must triumph before long.

The best part of the war on the side of Turkey was carried on by Ibrahim Pasha, the adopted son of Mehemet Ali, who ruled over Egypt as a vassal sovereign to the Sultan of Turkey. Ibrahim Pasha had great military capacity; he was full of energy, resource, and perseverance, and the Turkish Sultan could not have had a better man to undertake the task of conducting the campaign. The sympathies of Russia went strongly with the Greeks, or perhaps it might be more correct to say that the policy of Russia was directed against the Turks. At that time, as in later days, the public opinion of Western Europe was not always certain whether the movements of Russian statesmanship were governed more by the desire to strengthen Greece or by the desire to weaken Turkey. Canning had always been a sympathizer with the cause of Greece. In his early days his sympathy had taken poetic form, and now at last it had an opportunity of assuming a more practical shape. He would have wished well to any effort made by Russia for the emancipation of Greece, but he feared that if the effort were to be left to Russia alone the result might be a great European war, and his policy was above all things a policy of peace. His idea was to form an alliance which should exercise so commanding an influence as to render any prolonged resistance impossible. He succeeded in impressing his ideas and his arguments so effectively upon the Governments of France and Russia as to induce them to enter into a treaty with England for the avowed purpose of watching events in Eastern Europe, endeavoring to keep the conduct of the war within the limits of humanity, and bringing it to as early a close as possible.

The combined fleets of the three Powers were sent into the Mediterranean for the purpose of watching the movements of the Turkish and Egyptian fleets, which were threatening the shores of Greece. Sir Edward Codrington, the British Admiral, was in command of the expedition, and his instructions enjoined on him, in the usual official way, the necessity of caution and circumspection in all his movements. Something happened which brought the policy of caution to a speedy end. A report, which found some credit at the time, gave out that Sir Edward Codrington had received an unofficial hint that there was no necessity for carrying caution too far; but, however the event may have been brought about, it is certain that a collision did take place between the allied fleets and those which were championing the authority of the Sultan, and the result was that the Turkish and Egyptian war vessels were destroyed. This was the battle of Navarino, which was afterwards described in the language of British authority as "an untoward event." Untoward, in fact, it was not, for the purposes which Canning had in view, because it put an end to all the resistance of the Ottoman Power, and the independence of Greece as a self-governing nation was established and recognized. We have been somewhat anticipating events in order not to break up the story of the Greek struggle for independence, but it has to be said that Canning did not live to see the success of his own policy. Before the battle of Navarino had been fought, the career of the great statesman had come to an end. We shall have to retrace our steps, for there is much still left untold in the story of Canning's career.

That struggle for Greek independence will always be remembered in the history of English literature. It cost England the life of one of her greatest modern poets. Lord Byron died of fever in the swamps of Missolonghi on April 19, 1824, not long after he had left the Greek Islands to conduct his part of the campaign on the mainland of Greece. It was not his good fortune to die sword in hand fighting on the battle-field for the cause which he loved so well. It was not his good fortune even to have had a

chance of doing much of a soldier's work in that cause. There can be no doubt that if he had been graced with opportunity he would have shown that he had a leader's capacity as well as a soldier's courage—that, as Fortinbras says of Hamlet, "He was likely had he been put on to have proved most royally." He had only completed his thirty-sixth year shortly before his death, and the poem in which he commemorated his birthday can never be read without feelings of genuine emotion. His death created a profound sensation, not only in England, but all through the civilized world. Not long since we were all favored with an opportunity of hearing how the boy, afterwards to be famous as Alfred Tennyson, was thrilled by the news of Byron's death, and how it seemed to him to be like the ending of the world. The passion of partisanship for and against Byron as a poet and as a man has long since died away, and indeed it might perhaps be said that the reaction which, for a time, followed the outburst of his fame has spent itself as well. It may be taken now as the common judgment of the world that Byron was one of the great forces of modern poetry, and that his political sympathies sometimes had, as well as his poetic efforts, the inspiration of genius to guide them.

We must now return to the career of Canning as we left it at the time when he had made his great declaration of policy with regard to the revolted colonies of Spain on the American shores, and when he was as yet engaged in shaping the policy which was destined to end in the emancipation of Greece. There were questions of home government coming more and more to the front every day, which much disturbed the mind of King George, and made the business of keeping an Administration together more and more difficult for his advisers. The financial policy of the country had been gradually undergoing a change, owing to the foresight and enlightenment of some few among English statesmen. Lord Liverpool, to do him justice, was always a man of somewhat advanced views on questions of finance, although an inveterate Tory in all that related to popular representation and freedom of speech. Canning and his

friend William Huskisson were leading the way in the movement towards an enlightened financial system. Huskisson had done more than any other man, with the exception of Canning himself, to improve the systems of taxation. What may perhaps be called the scientific principle in the raising of revenue was only in process of development, and to many statesmen no better idea of increasing supplies seemed to have occurred than the simple plan of increasing the rate of custom or excise duty on the first article of general consumption which came under notice. Huskisson represented the new ideas, and put them into action whenever he was allowed a fair chance of making such an experiment. He had often held administrative office, had been Secretary of the Treasury, President of the Board of Trade, and Secretary for the Colonies, and had accomplished the removal of many restrictions on the commercial dealings of the colonies with foreign countries and the reduction of many antiquated and embarrassing import duties.

Canning and Huskisson were always close friends and often ministerial colleagues, and they two may be said to have led the way towards the system of free trade to which the time had not yet come for Robert Peel to give his complete adhesion. The great question of electoral reform was coming up, and Charles Grey and Henry Brougham were among its most conspicuous leaders. Canning did not take to Parliamentary reform, although he was what might be described as an advanced Liberal on most other questions of national importance. The Duke of Wellington was strongly opposed to any proposals for a change in the Parliamentary system, and this was one of the few great questions on which Canning and he were in habitual agreement. Then there was the still more pressing question of political equality for the Catholics of the three kingdoms. Lord John Russell succeeded later on in carrying the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts which precluded Protestant Dissenters from holding political or municipal office, but the attempt to obtain the rights of equal citizenship for subjects of the King who belonged

to the Church of Rome had to encounter much greater difficulties.

As might easily be expected, Ireland became the main battle-field of this struggle. We have already recorded the fact that Pitt had been greatly assisted in passing the Act of Union between Great Britain and Ireland and abolishing Grattan's Parliament by the hopes which he held out that the union of the legislatures would be followed by a complete measure of Catholic emancipation. George the Third refused point-blank to give his assent to any such measure, or even to listen to any proposal for its introduction, declaring again and again that his coronation oath absolutely forbade him to entertain an idea of the kind. In the end, as we have seen, Pitt gave in and undertook never again to worry the mind of his conscientious sovereign by any talk about relief to George the Third's Roman Catholic subjects. But it soon became evident that in this as in other instances the resolve of the most headstrong monarch, and the promise of the most yielding Prime Minister, cannot always induce a population to put up passively with a manifest grievance. In Ireland, where six out of every seven of the people belonged to the Church of Rome, and where the demand for Catholic Emancipation had long been championed by the greatest and the most patriotic of Protestant Irishmen, it was utterly impossible that any King and any minister could impose submission on such a question. By the time at which we have now arrived the Catholics of Ireland had found a political leader of their own faith.

Daniel O'Connell was undoubtedly one of the greatest advocates a popular cause has ever had in modern times. He was an Irishman who had become one of the most successful advocates in the Irish law courts, and as a popular orator he had no rival in his own country. He had made himself the leader in Ireland of the movement for Catholic Emancipation, and he had kindled an enthusiasm there which any English statesman of ordinary intelligence and foresight might easily have seen it would be impossible to extinguish so long as there was a struggle to be fought.

Canning had always been in favor of Catholic Emancipation. Lord Liverpool was, of course, entirely opposed to it, and almost until the last the Duke of Wellington held out against it. George the Fourth, for all his earlier associations with Fox and Sheridan, declared himself now to have inherited to the full his father's indomitable conscientious objection to any measure of Catholic Emancipation. George seemed, in fact, to have suddenly become filled with a passionate fervor of Protestant piety when any one talked to him about political equality for his Catholic subjects. He declared again and again that no earthly consideration could induce him to fall away from the religious convictions of his father on this subject, and the coronation oath had again become, to use Erskine's satirical phrase, "one of the four orders of the State." When reading some of George's letters and discourses on the subject, it is almost impossible not to believe that he really must have fancied himself in earnest when he made such protestations. In private life he frequently delivered long speeches, sometimes with astonishing fluency, sometimes with occasional interruptions of stammering, in vindication of his hostility to any proposal for Catholic Emancipation.

In the common language of the political world of that time the members of a Government who opposed the Catholic claims were called Protestant ministers, and the members in favor of the Catholic claims were described as Catholic ministers. In fact, it has had to be explained, for the sake of clearness, by some recent writers, that the word "Catholic" was constantly used in George the Fourth's time merely to signify pro-Catholic. When Canning was spoken of as a Catholic statesman there was not the least idea of describing him as a member of the Church of Rome, and, indeed, the words "Roman Catholic" hardly come up in the controversies of those days. When Mr. Lecky spoke during a recent Parliamentary debate of Catholics and Protestants, he was gravely rebuked by some divines of the Established Church who were under the impression that he was in some way or other truckling to the

claims of the Papacy when he used the word "Catholic" to describe the worshippers in the Church of Rome. Mr. Lecky was put to the trouble of explaining that he used the words "Protestant" and "Catholic" in the ordinary significance given to them during long generations of political controversy.

A crisis was suddenly brought about by the illness of Lord Liverpool. The Protestant statesman was stricken down by an attack which for a time deprived him of consciousness, and even after his partial recovery left him in a state which made it clear to all his friends that his work as an administrator was done. There was no hope whatever of his resuming official work, and the question which mainly occupied the mind of the King and of those around him was not what was to become of Lord Liverpool, but whom it would be most convenient for the King to appoint as his successor. Naturally every eye was turned on Canning, whether in hope or in fear. As Lord Palmerston said of himself many years later, so it might be said of Canning, he was the "inevitable man." The whole civilized world was filled with his fame. His course of policy had made England stronger than she had ever been since the death of the younger Pitt. Even King George could not venture to believe in the possibility of passing him over, and King George's chief objection to him was found in the fact that Canning was in favor of the Catholic claims. George thought the matter over a few days, consulted Lord Eldon and other advisers, and found that nobody could inspire him with any real hope of being able to form an enduring Ministry without Canning.

Then the King sent for Canning, and Canning made his own course quite clear. He came to the point at once. He assumed that the great difficulty was to be found in the pressure of the Catholic question, and he advised the King to form a Ministry of his own way of thinking on that subject and to do the best he could. The King, however, explained that it would be futile for him to think that any Ministry so composed could carry on the work of administration just then, and he gave Canning many

assurances of his own entire approval of his foreign policy, and declared that no one knew better than he did how much the power of England had increased with Continental States since Canning had obtained the conduct of her foreign affairs. Thus urged, Canning consented to undertake the formation of a Ministry, but he did so on the express condition that he should not only have the King's full confidence and be free to take his own course, but that he should be known to hold such a position and to have the absolute authority of the sovereign to sustain him. Canning's mind was, in fact, clearly made up. He would either be a real Prime Minister, or he would have no place in the new Administration, and would become once again an independent member. There was nothing else to be done, and the King gave Canning full authority to make his own arrangements.

The task which Canning had nominally undertaken was the reconstruction of the Ministry, but no one knew better than he did that it really amounted to the formation of a new Ministry. Canning was well aware that the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel would not consent to serve under him in any Administration. The Duke of Wellington was at this time entirely opposed to any recognition of the Catholic claims, and, more than that, he had never been in favor of the principles of foreign policy adopted and proclaimed by Canning. Between the two men, indeed, there was very little political sympathy, and Canning had got it into his mind, rightly or wrongly, that the Duke of Wellington had done his best to disparage him and to weaken his authority as Foreign Minister. Sir Robert Peel occupied a somewhat different position. He, too, was opposed to the Catholic claims; but he was a statesman of a far higher order than the Duke of Wellington, and it might always safely be assumed of him that he would rightly estimate the force of public opinion, and that when a great movement of political reform had proved itself to be irresistible Peel would never encourage a policy of futile resistance.

Peel's attitude is well described in the admirable life of

George Canning published by Mr. Frank Harrison Hill in 1887. "Peel," says Mr. Hill, "did not believe in governing against Parliamentary and public opinion." "To him the art of government was the measurement of social forces, and the adaptation of policy to their direction and intensity. When it was clear to him that a thing must be done, and that his help was essential to the doing of it, his duty was plainly marked out." Up to this time, however, Peel did not see that the Catholic question had reached such a stage, and he probably did not believe that it would ever reach such a stage. He had opposed Catholic claims thus far whenever the opportunity arose, and he could not undertake to serve under a Prime Minister who was openly in favor of recognizing those claims. We shall have to tell, before long, in the course of this history, how Peel came to see that Canning was right in his policy, and how he came to be the Prime Minister by whom it was carried to success, and how he brought the Duke of Wellington along with him. But at the time which we have now reached Peel still believed his own policy on the subject of Roman Catholic Emancipation to be the rightful policy for the guidance of the sovereign and the State, and he therefore found it impossible to serve in the new Administration. Five other members of the existing Government, besides Sir Robert Peel, resigned their places on the same grounds. One was, of course, the Duke of Wellington, and another was Lord Chancellor Eldon. Some influential peers who were not members of the Government made it known that they could not give their support to any Administration which admitted the possibility of recognizing the Catholic claims.

Canning's heart might well have sunk within him for a time when he found himself abandoned by such colleagues and thrown over by such supporters. He actually waited upon the King, and asked his permission to give up the undertaking for the formation of a new Ministry. The King, however, probably felt that he had gone too far in his support of Canning to draw back at such a moment. It is very likely that he was displeased by the pertinacity of

the resistance which men like Wellington and Peel and Eldon offered to any act of policy approved by him, and he had undoubtedly by this time come to have a strong faith, not only in Canning's capacity, but also in Canning's good fortune. Whatever may have been his chief inspiration, he certainly had an opportune season of enlightenment, and he refused to allow Canning to withdraw from the task assigned to him. Accordingly Canning became Prime Minister, and united in his own person the offices of First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Sir John Copley, raised to the peerage under the title of Lord Lyndhurst, became Lord Chancellor in succession to Lord Eldon, and the House of Lords thus obtained a member who was destined to be one of its foremost orators, to maintain a rivalry in Parliamentary debate with Brougham and the great Tory orator and leader, Lord Derby, and to be listened to with admiration by men still living, who are proud to remember that they heard some of his great speeches. It may be observed that Lord Eldon, whose retirement made way for Lord Lyndhurst, had been Lord Chancellor for twenty-six years, with the exception of one year when he was out of office. Huskisson became Treasurer of the Navy and President of the Board of Trade in the new Administration. Lord Palmerston was Secretary at War, and Frederick Robinson, now made Lord Goderich, who was in thorough sympathy with Canning and Huskisson on questions of financial policy, was Colonial and War Secretary, the latter office according to the arrangements of that time a position having quite different functions from those of the Secretary of War. The arrangements for the new Ministry were completed in April, 1827. Canning had now reached the highest point of his career. His policy had already been marked out for him, for England, and for Europe. The treaty between England, France, and Russia for the protection of Greece, which became a formal instrument after his accession to the office of Prime Minister, was the result of the efforts which he had made before Lord Liverpool's sudden illness

led to the break-up of the Liverpool Administration. Canning had little time left him to turn his new and great position to account. Fame, as Mr. Hill well says, was a sucked orange to George Canning when he accepted the office of Prime Minister.

The difficulties against which the new Ministry had to contend were many and great. Canning had the support of such Whigs as Brougham in the House of Commons, but in the House of Lords he had many powerful opponents, and the influence of the House of Lords then counted for more than it does at present. In the House of Lords, too, Lord Grey bitterly and pertinaciously opposed him. Grey was then one of the leading advocates of Parliamentary reform, and Canning could not see his way to ally himself with the Parliamentary reformers. Lord Grey, moreover, seems to have distrusted the sincerity of Canning's support of Catholic emancipation, a distrust for which no possible reason can be suggested; and, indeed, Grey would appear to have had a feeling of personal dislike to the great statesman. Accordingly he made several attacks on Canning and Canning's policy in the House of Lords, and Grey was an eloquent speaker, whose style as well as his character carried command with it. Canning was a man of singularly sensitive nature. Like many other brilliant humorists and satirists, he was somewhat thin-skinned and very quick of temper. He could bear a brilliant and even a splendid part in the Parliamentary battle, but it was a pain to him to endure in silence when he had no chance of making a retort. The attacks of Lord Grey exasperated him beyond measure, and it is believed that he had at one time a strong inclination to accept a peerage and take a seat in the House of Lords, thereby withdrawing forever from the inspiriting battle-ground of the House of Commons for the mere sake of having an opportunity of replying to the attacks of Lord Grey, and measuring his strength against that of the great Whig leader. The fates, however, denied to Canning any chance of making this curious anticlimax in his great political career. His health had always been more or less delicate, and he was

never very careful or sparing in the use of his physical powers. He was intensely nervous by constitution, and was liable to all manner of nervous seizures and maladies. In the early days of 1827 he caught a severe cold while attending the public funeral of the Duke of York in the Chapel Royal, Windsor.

The Duke of York was the second son of George the Third, and for some time had been regarded as heir-presumptive to the crown. The Duke's public career was in almost every way ignoble. He had proved himself an utterly incapable commander, although a good War Office administrator, and his personal character was about on a level with his military capacity. His death in January, 1827, may be said to have had two serious consequences at least—it made the Duke of Clarence the next heir to the crown, and it brought on Canning the severe cold from which he never recovered. It may be mentioned here, although the fact is of little political importance, that Canning when he became Prime Minister made the Duke of Clarence Lord High Admiral. The office was probably bestowed as a token of Canning's gratitude to the King who had stood by him, not indeed to the last, but at the last. It certainly could not have been given because of any conviction in Canning's mind that the Duke of Clarence was likely to render signal benefit to the royal navy, to the State, or to the country by his services in such an office.

Canning seemed for a while to rally from the cold which he had caught at the Duke of York's funeral, but the months of incessant anxiety which followed cast too heavy a burden on his shattered nerves and feeble physical frame. It was hoped by his friends that the adjournment of the Houses of Parliament, which took place after the Ministry had been formed, might give him rest enough from official work to allow him to repair his strength. But Canning's was not a nature which admitted of rest. The happy faculty which he had once possessed of getting easily to sleep when the day's work was done had long since deserted him, and of late he took his official cares to bed with him, and they kept him long awake. The early

summer of 1827 brought him no improvement, and his friends already began to fear for the worst. He suffered from intense agonies of nervous pain, and the agonies seemed to grow worse and worse with each return. The Duke of Devonshire offered him the use of a summer residence which he had at Chiswick, and Canning gladly accepted the offer. It was remarked at the time by some of his friends that an evil omen hung over this summer retreat. The former Duke of Devonshire, father of Canning's friend, had offered the same villa as a temporary retreat to Charles James Fox; the offer was accepted by him, and Fox actually died in the bedroom which was now occupied by Canning.

The omen soon made good its warning. Canning gradually sank under the influence of his fatal illness. He said to a friend that during three days he had suffered more pain than all that had been compressed into his life up to that time, and we know that his was a frame which was always liable to acute pain. He sank and sank, and on August 7 he talked for the last time coherently and composedly to those who were around him. Then he met his approaching death with a resigned and cheerful spirit, and his latest words showed that he knew where to repose his trust for the great change which was so near. Shortly before four o'clock on the morning of August 8, 1827, the struggle was over and the great statesman was at rest. Even at that early hour the villa was surrounded by a large crowd of anxious watchers, who could not leave the grounds until they heard the last tidings that were to come from the sick-chamber. The funeral of Canning in Westminster Abbey, although it was in name a private ceremonial, was followed by a throng of sorrowing admirers, among whom were princes and nobles, statesmen and prelates, politicians of all orders, and men and women of all ranks down to the very poorest, who thus bore their spontaneous tribute to the services and the memory of the great Prime Minister, and expressed in the only way left to them their sense of the loss which his country and the cause of peace and freedom had sustained by his death.

Canning had only just completed his fifty-seventh year when his career came to a close. He died before his old friend and colleague whose sudden illness had left open to him the place of Prime Minister, for Lord Liverpool did not die until December 4 of the following year. The place of Canning in English history is more clear to us now than it was to the world even when the anxious crowd was watching round the villa at Chiswick and when the throng followed his remains to Westminster Abbey. He was, as we have already said, the founder of that system of foreign policy which English statesmanship has professed ever since his time. His was that doctrine of conditional non-intervention for which, in later days, men like John Stuart Mill contended as the doctrine which ought to be the governing principle of a great council of European States, if such could be established. Canning's idea was not that England should proclaim such a principle of non-intervention as that which Cobden and Bright, and other men equally sincere and patriotic, endeavored to impress on public opinion at a later day. Canning's principle was that England should not intervene even on the right side of any Continental struggle in which she had no direct concern, unless some other State equally free from any direct share in the controversy were making preparation to intervene on the wrong side. Then, according to his doctrine, England was bound to say to the interposing State: "If you, an outsider to this controversy, are making up your mind to intervene on what we believe to be the wrong side, then it may become our duty to intervene on what we believe to be the right side." It was in accordance with this principle that Canning prevailed upon the Governments of France and Russia to enter into that engagement with England which secured the independence of Greece, as it was in accordance with this principle that he had made the proclamation of policy which secured the independence of the Spanish-American colonies, and thus called in the New World to redress the balance of the Old.

Canning must, on the whole, be ranked among great Liberal statesmen, although there were some passages in

his career which showed that he had not advanced quite so far in Liberal principles as some of the statesmen of his own day. It is hard now to understand how such a man could have stood out against the principle of Parliamentary reform and popular suffrage, and could have resisted the efforts to give full rights of citizenship to the members of dissenting denominations. It is especially hard to understand why a man who was in favor of abolishing religious disqualifications in the case of Roman Catholics should have thought it right to maintain them in the case of Protestant Dissenters. The explanation of this latter inconsistency may be found, perhaps, in the assumption that when Canning thought of the grievance to Roman Catholics he had in his mind the grievances to the Roman Catholics of Ireland, a separate country with a nationality and traditions of her own, and a country in which the vast majority of the population belonged to the one religious faith. He may have thought that the English Protestant Dissenters who did not see their way to class themselves with the Protestants of the English State Church had not so distinct a claim to the recognition of their grievance. It may seem strange that a mind like Canning's could have been beguiled from the acceptance of a great principle by a curious distinction of this kind, but it must be remembered that down to a much later day many of the professed supporters of religious equality contended for some limitation of the principle where political privileges were concerned, and that only in our own time has admission to the House of Commons been left open to the professors of every religious faith, and even to those who profess no religious faith at all. So far as Parliamentary reform in the ordinary sense of the words is concerned, we may feel quite sure that if Canning had lived a few years longer his mind would have accepted the growth of public opinion and the evidences which justified that growth, and he would not have been found among the unteachable opponents of popular suffrage and a well-adjusted Parliamentary representation.

As a financial reformer he was distinctly in advance of

his time, and even such men as Sir Robert Peel only followed slowly in the path which Canning and Huskisson had opened. Canning's fame as a Parliamentary orator is now well assured. He has been unduly praised, and he has been unduly disparaged. He has been described as the greatest Parliamentary orator since the days of Bolingbroke, and he has been described as a brilliant and theatric declaimer who never rose to the height of genuine political oratory. The common judgment of educated men now regards him as only inferior, if inferior at all, to the two Pitts and Fox among great Parliamentary orators, and the rival of any others belonging to his own, or an earlier, or a later day in the history of the English Parliament. Of him it may fairly be said that his career made an era in England's political life, and that the great principles which he asserted are still guiding the country even at this hour.

CHAPTER LXVII.

"THE CHAINS OF THE CATHOLIC."

During the closing days of Canning's life he was speaking to Sir William Knighton of the approaching end, and he said, quietly: "This may be hard upon me, but it is still harder upon the King." There was something characteristic in the saying. Canning had been greatly touched by the manner in which the King had, at last, come round to him and stood by him against all who endeavored to interpose between him and his sovereign; and to a man of Canning's half-poetic temperament the sovereign typified the State and the people, to whom the Prime Minister was but a devoted servant. It was certainly hard upon the King, at least for the time. George must have had moments of better feelings and better inspirations than those which governed the ordinary course of his life, and he had lately come to realize the value of the services which Canning had rendered to England. We shall see, before long, that a secession of Canning's followers from the party in power took place, and that the seceding men were called, and called themselves, the "Canningites." George already appears to have become a Canningite.

The King had a good deal of trouble in forming an Administration. Lord Goderich became Prime Minister, with Lyndhurst again as Lord Chancellor, and Huskisson in Goderich's former place at the War and Colonial Office. Lord Goderich, as we have seen, had been sent into the House of Lords when Canning became Prime Minister. Up to that time he was Mr. Frederick John Robinson, generally known by the nickname of "Prosperity Robinson." This satirical designation he obtained from the fact that while he was President of the Board of Trade, and

still later when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer, he had always made it his business in each session to describe the country as in a condition of unparalleled prosperity. More than that, he always insisted on declaring that the particular schemes of taxation that he brought forward were destined, beyond all possibility of doubt, to increase still further that hitherto unexampled prosperity. It had been his fortune, in his early official career, to propose and carry some schemes of taxation which met with such passionate opposition in some parts of the country as to lead to serious rioting and even to loss of life. But all the time he saw only prosperity as the result of his financial enterprises, and hence the nickname, which is still remembered in England's Parliamentary history.

Lord Goderich was not a man of remarkable political capacity, and he was a poor, ineffective, and even uninteresting speaker, except when the audacity of his statements, and his prophecies, and the tumult of interruptions and laughter that they created, lent a certain Parliamentary interest to his orations. He had an immense amount of that sort of courage which, in the colloquial language of our times, would probably be described as bumptiousness. He had an unlimited faith in his own capacity, and he saw nothing but success, personal and national, where observers in general could discern only failure. He was one of a class of men who are to be found at all times of Parliamentary history, and who manage somehow, nobody quite knows how, to make themselves appear indispensable to their political party. He was not, however, without any faculty for improvement, and of late years he had derived some instruction from Canning's teaching and example in politics and in finance. Such as he was, his appointment as Prime Minister in succession to Canning seemed about the safest compromise the King could make under all the existing conditions. His position as a stopgap was maintained but a very short time. During his Administration, or perhaps it ought rather to be called his nominal Administration, the substantial result of Canning's recent foreign policy was seen in the destruction

of the Turkish and Egyptian fleets at the battle of Navarino, which led almost immediately to the Sultan's acknowledgment of the independence of Greece.

Some differences of opinion on financial questions soon broke out in the Cabinet, and Huskisson and certain of his colleagues threatened to resign; and Lord Goderich, seeing little or no chance of maintaining himself long in his position, got out of the difficulty by tendering his own resignation. The King accepted the resignation, and there was then really only one man, the Duke of Wellington, to whom George could look for the construction of a Government. Accordingly, the Duke became First Lord of the Treasury, and Huskisson retained, for the time, his former position. During this Administration Lord John Russell brought forward his motion for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts; the object of the motion being to abolish all the conditions which rendered it impossible for the members of any Protestant dissenting denomination to hold State or municipal office, unless they were willing to accept a test-oath, which acknowledged the spiritual supremacy of the Church of England. Lord John Russell's motion was carried in the House of Commons by a majority of 237 to 193, and a Bill founded on the principle of the motion was passed through both Houses of Parliament. This may be described as the first of the great measures accepted by Parliament for the purpose of establishing the principle of religious equality, in admission to the rights of citizenship, among the inhabitants of these countries. Of course, the establishment of religious equality was yet a good long way off, and it is a curious fact that the measure that was founded on Lord John Russell's motion did something very distinct in itself to make new battle-grounds for those who advocated the full recognition of the principle.

The new measure proposed to admit the members of all recognized Protestant denominations, whether inside or outside the Church of England, to the rights of citizenship, but it took good care to affirm that it had no intention of admitting any one else. The Act provided that all per-

sons presenting themselves as candidates for election to political or municipal office should subscribe a declaration "on the true faith of a Christian." This, of course, excluded Jews and Freethinkers, while the Roman Catholics were shut out by a special oath, directed exclusively against themselves, and to which it was impossible that any professing Catholic could subscribe. Lord John Russell, however, had begun his great career well when he carried the Legislature with him, even thus far, on the way to religious equality, although he was not himself destined to see the last fight which had to be fought before the principle had been completely established. It is almost needless to say that the new form of pledge introduced by the measure was no part of Lord John Russell's plan, but he accepted the Bill as amended in the House of Lords rather than sacrifice, for the time, the whole purpose of his motion. The motion, it may be added, was strongly opposed in the House of Commons, not only by Robert Peel, but by Huskisson. Peel's opposition is easily to be understood, because up to this time he had not risen above the convictions with which he started in public life in favor of the general practice of making the political and civic rights of citizenship conditional upon what he believed to be religious orthodoxy. In the case of Huskisson, who was a strong supporter of the admission of Roman Catholics to full equality of political and civic rights with the members of the State Church, the explanation probably was that he feared if the Dissenters received their rights in advance they might become less zealous than many of them had been for the full recognition of the Catholic claims. Some of the archbishops and bishops in the House of Lords were liberal enough to give their support to the Bill, much to the consternation of Lord Eldon, who could not understand how any prelate of the State Church could be so far led away from the sacred duties of his position as to lend any countenance to a measure admitting the unorthodox to the place in society which ought to be the right only of orthodox believers.

It is interesting to notice that a protest was entered

against the introduction of the words "on the true faith of a Christian" by Lord Holland, who represented the principles of Charles James Fox. The peers, it should be said, enjoy the privilege, which is not allowed to members of the representative chamber, of recording their formal protest on the books of their House against any motion or measure which has been carried in spite of their opposition, and of setting forth reasons on which their objection is founded. Many of the protests thus recorded form important contributions to political history. Lord Holland vindicates his protest in words which are well worth quoting: "Because the introduction of the words 'upon the true faith of a Christian' implies an opinion in which I cannot conscientiously concur, namely, that a particular faith in matters of religion is necessary to the proper discharge of duties purely political or temporal." Lord Eldon strongly condemned the action of the prelates who had voted in favor of the measure, and he used some words which showed that, however obtuse his bigotry may have been, he clearly saw what must inevitably come from the concession to religious liberty which was made by the passing of such a measure. "Sooner or later," he said, "perhaps in this very year, almost certainly in the next, the concessions to the Dissenters must be followed by the like concessions to the Roman Catholics." The Roman Catholic claims were already asserting themselves with a force which appealed irresistibly to the minds of all enlightened men.

The Catholic Association had been formed in Ireland for the purpose of advocating the claims of the vast majority of the Irish people, and it had found for its leader a man who must have made a great figure in the political life of any era, and who was especially qualified to take a leading place in such an agitation. Daniel O'Connell was one of the most remarkable men of his time. He was the first Irish political leader of modern days who professed the faith which may be called the national creed of his people. The leaders of great Irish movements just before his time—the Fitzgeralds, the Tones, and the Emmets—

had been, like Grattan himself, members of the Established Church. O'Connell had, moreover, no sympathy whatever with the sentiments of the French Revolution. He had passed a few of his early years in France, he had seen some of the later excesses of the revolutionary period, and he had been inspired with a horror as great as that felt by Edmund Burke for the extravagances of the revolutionary era. He belonged to the landlord class, but his sympathies had always been with the popular and national movements of his countrymen. He had practised at the Irish bar, and had become the greatest advocate in the Irish law courts, and was thus enabled to combine with all the fire and energy of a born popular leader the subtlety and craft of a trained and practised lawyer. O'Connell was one of the greatest orators of a day when political oratory could display some of its most splendid illustrations. He had a commanding presence, indeed a colossal form, and a voice which was marvellous alike for the strength and the music of its varied intonations. Such men as Disraeli and Bulwer Lytton have borne enthusiastic tribute to the magic of that voice, and have declared it to be unrivalled in the political eloquence of the time. O'Connell made his voice heard at many great public meetings in England and in Scotland, as well as in Ireland, and his political views had, indeed, much in common with those of English and Scottish advanced Liberals.

The Catholic Association was made, at one period of its career, the subject of an Act of Parliament which declared it to be, for a certain time, an illegal organization, and the period was now approaching when the prohibitory Act would have to be renewed or allowed to drop out of existence. In consequence of some ministerial rearrangements a vacancy had arisen in the Parliamentary representation of the county of Clare in Ireland, and O'Connell resolved on taking a bold and what then seemed to many a positively desperate step. He announced himself as a candidate for the vacancy in opposition to its former occupant, who, having been appointed to ministerial office, was compelled to resign his place in the House of Com-

mons and offer himself to his former constituents for re-election. O'Connell was not disqualified by positive enactment from becoming a candidate for a seat in Parliament; that is to say, there was no law actually declaring that a Roman Catholic, as such, could not enter the House of Commons. But, as we have explained already, it was the law of the land that no man could take his seat in that House until he had subscribed an oath which it was perfectly impossible for any Roman Catholic to accept, an oath disavowing and denouncing the very opinions which are an essential part of the Roman Catholic's faith. O'Connell, therefore, could not be prevented from becoming a candidate for the representation of Clare, and when the contest came on it ended in his being triumphantly returned by an overwhelming majority. O'Connell presented himself at the table of the House of Commons, and was called upon to subscribe the usual oath, which, of course, he absolutely refused to do. He was then ordered to withdraw, and he did withdraw, and the seat was declared vacant. O'Connell returned to Clare, again offered himself as candidate, and was again elected by a triumphant majority. Then, indeed, men like Lord Eldon must have begun to think that the old world was really coming to an end. King George and the Government found themselves face to face with a crisis to which there had been no parallel in the memory of living statesmen.

The progress of events was, meanwhile, making a deep impression on the receptive mind of Sir Robert Peel, now Home Secretary, and by far the most rising and powerful member of the Administration. Huskisson, it should be said, had by this time ceased to belong to the Duke of Wellington's Government. There had been some misunderstanding between him and the Duke, arising out of a speech made by Huskisson in Liverpool, which was understood to contain a declaration that Huskisson had only accepted office on the express understanding that the policy of the Duke's Government was to be the policy of Canning. The Duke took exception to this, and declared that he had entered into no understanding as to his general

policy, but that what Huskisson probably had said was that he had accepted the composition of the Government as a guarantee in itself that a sound national policy was to be carried out.

Huskisson accepted the explanation, and explained that this was what he really had said, and no doubt this was really the purpose of that passage in his speech; but the incident led to some friction between the two men, and was the beginning of other misunderstandings. Some difference of opinion afterwards arose on minor questions of policy, and Huskisson sent to the Duke a somewhat hasty letter announcing his resignation. The letter was intended to be only a conditional intimation of his purpose, but the Duke took it as positive and final, and announced it as such to the King. There was no course left open to Huskisson but to resign. The incident created much talk at the time, and gave rise to a good deal of satirical comment. Several other members of the Government, among whom was Lord Palmerston, resigned along with Huskisson, and they formed themselves into an independent party, bearing the name of the Canningites. It is curious to notice that the reconstructions caused in the Government by these resignations, and the new appointments which had to be made, led to that vacancy in the county of Clare which gave O'Connell an opportunity of coming forward as a candidate for the seat and being elected.

Peel saw that the Duke of Wellington's Government had lost some of its most influential members. Other events, too, had been turning his attention towards the growth of the agitation in Ireland. The Marquis of Wellesley, elder brother of the Duke of Wellington, had been Viceroy of Ireland. Wellesley had been a distinguished statesman, and as Viceroy of India had conducted to a successful issue, with the help of his younger brother, the great Mahratta war. When he became Viceroy of Ireland he had gone over to that country as a strong opponent of the Catholic claims, but his experience there soon convinced him that it would be impossible to resist those claims much longer, and at the same time

to keep Ireland in tranquillity. Therefore, when the Duke of Wellington, on coming into office as Prime Minister, refused to recognize the Catholic claims, Lord Wellesley resigned his place. He was succeeded by the Marquis of Anglesey, a soldier who had done brilliant service in the wars against Napoleon, and was well known as a determined opponent of the demands made by the advocates of Catholic emancipation. Lord Anglesey, too, became satisfied during his time of office in Ireland that there was no alternative between emancipation and an armed rebellion among the Irish Catholics, a large number of whom were actually serving in the ranks of the army. His opinions were again and again impressed on the Government, and the course he took only led to his recall from the Viceroyalty.

In the House of Commons an event took place which had a great effect on the mind of Peel. Early in 1828 Sir Francis Burdett, who held a very prominent place among the more advanced reformers of the time, and who represented Westminster in the House of Commons, brought forward a resolution inviting the House to consider the state of the laws affecting the Roman Catholics of the two islands, "with a view to such a final and conciliatory settlement as may be conducive to the peace and strength of the United Kingdom, to the stability of the Protestant Establishment, and to the general satisfaction and concord of all classes of his Majesty's subjects." The resolution was supported by a powerful speech from Brougham, in which he dwelt on the fact that not one of those who opposed the motion had expressed any conviction that the existing state of things could long continue, and that it was impossible to overlook or deny the great advance which the movement for Catholic Emancipation had been making in and out of Parliament. Peel was greatly impressed by this argument, and also by the fact that the men who supported Burdett and Brougham in the House of Commons represented the best part of the intellect and statesmanship of that House. The resolution was carried by 272 votes against 266 on the other side, a small majority,

indeed, but a majority that at such a time was large enough to show a man of Peel's intellect the practical progress which the demand for Catholic Emancipation had already made.

We find in Peel's own correspondence the most interesting evidences of the influence which all these events were making on his clear and thoughtful mind. The man whom O'Connell had defeated in Clare, Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald, had represented the constituency for many years, had always supported by speeches and votes the claims of the Catholics, and was the son of one who had stood by the side of Grattan and Sir John Parnell in resisting the Act of Union. No one could have been more popular up to that time among Irishmen, and the election of O'Connell was obviously due to the fact that O'Connell had made himself the leader of a movement which had for its object to bring about a great crisis, and to compel the Parliament and the Government to surrender at once or encounter a civil war. Peel asked himself—we quote his own words—"whether it may not be possible that the fever of political and religious excitement which was quickening the pulse and fluttering the bosom of the whole Catholic population—which had inspired the serf of Clare with the resolution and the energy of a free man—which had in the twinkling of an eye made all considerations of personal gratitude, ancient family connections, local preferences, the fear of worldly injury, the hope of worldly advantage subordinate to the one absorbing sense of religious obligation and public duty—whether, I say, it might not be possible that the contagion of that feverish excitement might spread beyond the barriers which under ordinary circumstances the habits of military obedience and the strictness of military discipline opposed to all such external influences?"

Peel became gradually convinced that the Marquis of Anglesey was right in his views, and that there was no choice between a recognition of the Catholic claims and the outbreak of a civil war in Ireland. The more he thought over the question, the more he became convinced that it would not be possible to rely on the loyalty of all

the Catholic soldiers in the ranks of the army in Ireland if they were called upon to join in shooting down their own brothers and friends because these had risen in rebellion against the oppressive laws which excluded a Catholic from the full rights of citizenship. Peel was not a philosopher or a dreamer, but above all things a practical statesman, and when he had to choose between civil war and the concession of a claim which was admitted to be right and just by some of the most enlightened Englishmen and Scotchmen who sat near him on the benches of the House of Commons, and by some of the most enlightened Englishmen and Scotchmen outside the House, he could not bring himself to believe that claims thus advocated could be so essentially unjust or unreasonable as to make their continued refusal worth the cost of so terrible a struggle.

Peel made up his mind to the fact that Catholic Emancipation must, as soon as possible, become the work of Parliament. But he did not yet believe that he was the right man to undertake the task. It seemed to him that one who had always been regarded as the determined opponent of Emancipation would not be likely to win over many supporters among his Tory friends for such a sudden change of policy. He did not think himself well suited, and he was not inclined, to conduct the negotiations which would be necessary between any Government attempting such a task and the Irish advocates of Emancipation. His idea was that Lord Grey, as the head of the reforming party, would be the statesman best qualified to undertake such an enterprise and most likely to carry it to an early success. His first business, however, would clearly be to convince the Duke of Wellington that Catholic Emancipation was inevitable, and this work he at once set himself to accomplish. He had some trouble in bringing the Duke over to his own opinions, but the Duke became convinced in the end, and, indeed, both at that time and after, the Duke was always inclined to follow Peel's guidance, on the plain, practical, soldierly principle that Peel understood political affairs much better than he did,

and that Peel's advice was always sure to be sound and safe. So the Duke, too, became convinced that Catholic Emancipation must be accepted as inevitable, and that the sooner it was carried through the better. But Wellington was strongly opposed to the idea of handing over the work to Lord Grey. He showed that it would be hardly possible to induce King George to accept the services of Lord Grey for such a purpose. The King was known to dislike Lord Grey, whose stern, unbending manners could not be welcome to a sovereign unaccustomed to the dictation of so uncourtierlike an adviser as the leader of the Whig party.

Wellington's idea was that, as the thing had to be done, it had better be done by Peel and himself, and he almost implored Peel not to desert him at such a crisis. Peel could not resist the personal and brotherly appeal thus made to him by one for whom he had so profound a respect, and the result was that the two agreed to work together as they had been doing, and to make Catholic Emancipation the business of their Government. But then the King had to be won over, and nobody knew better than Wellington did how difficult this task must be. Yet he did not despair. He had had some experience of the King's resistance and the only means by which it could be got over. Again and again he had had occasion to urge on the sovereign the adoption of some course to which George, at first, was obstinately opposed, and he knew that quiet persistence was the only way of carrying his point. His plan was to avoid argument as much as possible, to state his case concisely to the King, and allow the King to take his full time in pouring forth his protestations that he never could and never would consent to such a policy. The King was very fond of hearing himself talk, and loved on such occasions to display all that eloquence which he fully believed himself to possess, and which he had no opportunity of letting out on any Parliamentary or public platform. Then, when the King had exhausted himself in repeating over and over again his reasons for refusing the demands made upon him, Wellington would quietly return to the fact that there was no practical way out of the difficulty but to assent to

the proposition. The King usually gave way, and the interview had a satisfactory close. The King was appeased by the sound of his own eloquence, and the taciturn minister had his way.

This course of policy Wellington resolved to adopt with regard to the question of Catholic Emancipation. He listened to all the talk about the coronation oath and the declaration that George would rather retire to his kingdom of Hanover, abdicate the throne of England, and leave the English people to find a Catholic—that is, a pro-Catholic—king in the Duke of Clarence, and then merely pointed out to the sovereign that something had to be done, and that his Majesty's advisers could think of nothing else but the course which they proposed for his acceptance. The King gave way to a certain extent, but he put his foot down, as the modern phrase goes, on the maintenance of the Oath of Supremacy in its existing form.

There is an interesting account given of the final interview which the Duke of Wellington, Lord Lyndhurst, and Robert Peel had with their royal master on this subject. Without an alteration in the terms of the Oath of Supremacy it was absolutely impossible that Roman Catholics could enter the House of Commons, for the oath contained the very words no Catholic could possibly consent to utter or subscribe. The King absolutely and vehemently refused to give his consent to any alteration of the oath, and he then asked his three ministers what, under the circumstances, they proposed to do. The ministers informed the sovereign that they proposed to ask his permission for them to make announcement in the two Houses of Parliament that they had ceased to hold office and were no longer responsible for the work of administration. George took the announcement at first with gracious composure, and told them he supposed he could not find any fault with them for their act of resignation. He carried his kindness even further, for, as we learn on the authority of one of the three ministers, "the King took leave of us with great composure and great kindness, gave to each of us a salute on each cheek, and accepted our resignation of office."

Thackeray, in his lecture on George the Fourth, turned this record to most amusing account, and delighted his audience by a comical description of the King's paternal benediction imprinted in kisses on the cheeks of Wellington, Lyndhurst, and Peel. But when the kissing was over and the three statesmen had departed, the King began to find that he was left practically without a Government. What was to be done? It would be impossible to form a Government after his own heart without such men as Wellington, Lyndhurst, and Peel, and even if he could have got over his own personal dislike to Lord Grey, it was impossible to suppose that Lord Grey would become the head of any Government which did not undertake Catholic Emancipation. The King found himself in the awkward position of having either to announce to his subjects that he intended to govern without any ministers, and to direct the affairs of the State entirely out of his own head, or to call back to office the men whom he had kissed and sent away. Even George the Fourth could not hesitate when such a choice was forced upon him. He wrote to the Duke of Wellington, telling him that he must once more put himself in the hands of the Duke and his colleagues, and let them deal as they thought best with Catholic Emancipation.

The Catholic Relief Bill was at once brought in, and consisted in substance of the enactment of a new oath, which admitted Roman Catholics to Parliament and to all political and civil offices excepting merely those of Regent, Lord Chancellor, and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. The Bill was passed rapidly through both Houses of Parliament. The third reading was carried in the House of Commons by 320 votes to 142, and in the House of Lords by 213 to 109, and the great controversy was happily at an end. The settlement, however, was not effected with as complete and liberal a spirit as Peel would certainly have infused into it if he could have had his way.

O'Connell, who had been twice elected for Clare, was not allowed to take his seat under the new measure until he had returned to his constituents and submitted himself for

re-election—a ceremonial absolutely unnecessary, and only impressing the civilized world as an evidence of the ungenerous and ungracious manner in which the inevitable had been accepted. Then, again, an Act of Parliament was passed disfranchising the class of voters in Ireland who were called the Forty-shilling Freeholders, who formed a large proportion of O'Connell's constituents. This was done no doubt to put some obstacles, at all events, in the way of the Irish Catholic population if they should hope ever again to make the representation of any national claims as effective as they had done in the Clare election. It may be taken for granted that Peel would not have marred the effect of an act of mere justice by niggardly qualifications of any kind, but he knew he had to deal with a Tory House of Lords, and was content to accept some compromise as long as he could carry the main object of his policy. The first great chapter in the modern history of political reform had come to a thrilling close.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

THE LAST OF THE GEORGES.

One incident connected more or less directly with the Catholic Emancipation question deserves historical record, if only for the curious light it throws upon the contrast between the manners of that day and the manners of more recent times. Shortly before the passing of the Catholic Relief Bill, the Earl of Winchilsea wrote a letter which was published in one of the newspapers strongly denouncing the conduct of the Duke of Wellington, and declaring him guilty of having joined in a conspiracy to overthrow the Church and the Constitution of England under false pretences. This letter was addressed to the secretary of a committee formed for the establishment of King's College in London, and Lord Winchilsea had apparently assumed that the subject under consideration warranted him in expressing his views with regard to the conduct of the Prime Minister on the Catholic relief question. In more recent times, of course, such a letter might have been written by anybody, whether peer or commoner, and published in all the newspapers of the country without calling for the slightest notice on the part of a Prime Minister. The Duke of Wellington, however, lived at a time when a different code of honor and etiquette prevailed. He wrote to Lord Winchilsea a letter, the principal passage of which is worth quoting to illustrate the peculiar sense of duty which could, at the time, direct the conduct of a man like the Duke of Wellington. "The question for me now to decide is this: Is a gentleman who happens to be the King's Minister to submit to be insulted by any gentleman who thinks proper to attribute to him disgraceful or criminal motives for his conduct as an individual? I cannot

doubt of the decision which I ought to make on this question. Your Lordship is alone responsible for the consequences." This was, of course, a challenge to Lord Winchilsea to withdraw his accusation or to fight a duel forthwith.

Now, to the cool, philosophic mind, at least in later times, it might well seem obvious that whether Lord Winchilsea's charge against the Duke of Wellington was just or unjust, its justice or injustice could not in any way be made clear by the discharge of bullets from the pistols of the challenger and the challenged. The cool, philosophic observer of a later time might wonder also how the Duke's sense of public responsibility could allow him to peril a life which he must have known to be of the highest value to his country, for the sake of taking part in a combat with an antagonist whose personal opinion of the Duke and of the Duke's conduct could not be of the slightest importance to the vast majority of the Duke's countrymen. But the Duke of Wellington was not in any case a cool, philosophic observer, and he lived at a time when the established or tolerated code of what was called personal honor seemed to have nothing to do either with Christian morals, with political expediency, or with ordinary common-sense. Wellington accepted without question the dictates of the supposed code of honor, and he sent his challenge. Lord Winchilsea, it will be seen, did not intend to stand by his gross and preposterous charge against the Duke, but he did not think that the code of honor allowed him to say so like a man, and tender an apology like what we should now call a gentleman, without first subjecting himself to the fire of his wrongfully accused antagonist. So the Duke and the Earl went out with their seconds and met at Wimbledon. The victor of Waterloo was not destined to kill or be killed in this absurd contest. When the parties to the duel were placed on the ground and the word was given, Lord Winchilsea reserved his fire, the bullet from the Duke's pistol passed him without doing any harm, and Lord Winchilsea then discharged his pistol in the air, and authorized his second to make known his retraction of his

charge against the Duke, and his apology for having made such a charge. The retraction and the apology were published in the newspapers, and there, to use a form of words which was very common at the time after such an incident, the affair ended with equal honor to both parties.

It seems hard now to understand how any man, in the position and with the responsibilities of the Duke of Wellington, could bring himself to think that he was called upon to risk his life for the mere sake of resenting an imputation which no rational man in his senses could possibly have regarded as of any consequence to the Duke's public or private character. The whole incident seems to us now one more properly belonging to comic opera than to serious political life. We can hardly conceive the possibility of the Marquis of Salisbury insisting on fighting a duel with some hot-headed member of the House of Lords who had chosen to describe him as a conspirator against the Constitution and the Church of England. The Duke of Wellington, however, must be judged according to the ways of his own time, and the code of political and personal honor in which he had been nurtured. There has not been in modern political history a more conscientious and high-minded statesman than Robert Peel, and yet not very long before the Winchilsea business Robert Peel had only been prevented by the interference of the law from going out to fight a duel with Daniel O'Connell, and O'Connell himself had killed his man in another affair of honor, as it was called. We who live in these islands at the present time may be excused if we indulge in a certain feeling of self-complacency when we contemplate the advance towards a better code of personal honor and a better recognition of the teachings of Christianity which has been made here since the days when the Duke of Wellington thought that for him, as a gentleman, there was no other course to take than to risk his life because an insignificant person had made a ridiculous charge against him.

Still, it is something to know that there were cool observers even at the time who thought the Duke of Wellington had done wrong. Charles Greville, in commenting on

the duel, says that "everybody, of course, sees the matter in a different light; all blame Lord Winchilsea, but they are divided as to whether the Duke ought to have fought or not." "Lord Winchilsea is such a maniac, and has so lost his head, that everybody imagined the Duke would treat what he said with silent contempt." Greville utterly condemns Lord Winchilsea for having made the attack on the Duke, and for not having sent an apology when it was first required of him, but he adds: "I think, having committed the folly of writing so outrageous a letter, he did the only thing a man of honor could do in going out and receiving a shot and then making an apology, which he was all this time prepared to do, for he had it ready written in his pocket." Most of us at this time of day would be inclined to think that if Lord Winchilsea was willing to make the apology and had it ready written in his pocket, he might have acted according to a better code of honor by not exposing the Duke to the chance of killing him. However, we must not expect too much from Greville, and it is well to know, as his final verdict on the whole affair, that "I think the Duke ought not to have challenged him; it was very juvenile, and he stands in far too high a position, and his life is so much *publica cura* that he should have treated him and his letter with the contempt they merited." The King, it seems, approved of the Duke of Wellington's conduct in making the letter the subject of a challenge and meeting his opponent in a duel. Greville goes on to remark that somebody said "the King would be wanting to fight a duel himself," whereupon some one else observed, "He will be sure to think that he has fought one."

The Duke of Wellington had a great deal to trouble him after the passing of the Catholic Relief Bill. There was great distress all over the country, and the discontent was naturally in proportion to the distress. Wellington had lost much of his popularity with the more extreme members of his own party, who could not lift their minds to an understanding of the reasons which had compelled him to change his old opinions on the Catholic question. It cannot be doubted, too, that he sometimes felt disappointed

with the results which were following from his policy tow ards Ireland. Members of his own party were continually dinning into his ears their declaration that the measure passed in favor of the Roman Catholics had not put a stop to agitation in Ireland, and that, on the contrary, O'Connell was now beginning to agitate for a repeal of the Act of Union. At that time, as at all times, the opponents of any great act of justice were eager to make out that its concession must have been an utter failure, because instead of satisfying everybody forever it had only led other people to demand that other acts of justice should also be done. Some members of Wellington's own party were now inclined for the first time to become advocates of Parliamentary reform, on the ground that nothing but a reduced franchise in England could save the State Church from being overthrown by the emancipated Roman Catholics. Those who had trembled before at the possibility of revolutionary sentiments leading to the subversion of the throne, now declared themselves in terror lest the spread of Roman Catholic doctrine should lead to the subversion of the Protestant altar. The truth is, and it is a truth of which governments have to be reminded even in our own times, that the long delay of justice was alone answerable for any alarm which might have been caused by its sudden concession. The arguments in favor of Catholic Emancipation were just as strong, and ought to have been just as clear, to all rational men before it became evident to Wellington and Peel that there was no choice but between emancipation and civil war. The plain duty of a civilized government is to redress injustice at the earliest possible moment, and not to wait idly or ignorantly until the danger of a popular uprising makes instant redress inevitable.

The great distress in many parts of the country was in the mean time leading to new forms of crime. The burning of corn-ricks and farm-houses was becoming in many districts the terrible form in which hunger and want of work made wild war against property. The Game Laws, which were then at their highest pitch of severity, led to

ferocious and frequent struggles between the patrons and the enemies of legalized monopoly. Poachers were killed by game preservers, and game preservers were killed by poachers. Every assize court told this same story. An entirely new form of crime broke out in the murders which were committed for the sake of obtaining bodies to be sold for the purposes of dissection. The price of food was often made enormously high by the purely artificial restrictions imposed upon its importation, and even in some cases on its mere production, and in ordinary human society increase of poverty always means increase of crime. A large proportion of the population was sunk in absolute ignorance, and as yet no systematic attempt whatever was made to establish any form of national education. The luxury and the extravagance of the rich were enormous, and were greatly stimulated by the example of the sovereign and the Court. Under the influence of the spasmodic and unreal impulse given to commercial activity by the late wars the rich seemed to be growing richer, while by the increased taxation which was the result of these wars the poor were certainly made to grow poorer. The demand for Parliamentary reform was beginning to express itself in systematic movements. Lord John Russell and Henry Brougham made their voices heard in the House of Commons and throughout the country. Daniel O'Connell went so far as to declare that nothing would satisfy him short of universal suffrage—manhood suffrage, that is to say—vote by ballot, and triennial Parliaments. This was thought at the time by most people to be the mere raving of a madman or the wild outcry of a revolutionary demagogue. We are not very far from the full accomplishment of the programme just now. The agitation against slavery and the slave trade was becoming an important movement. The time, in fact, was one of storm and high pressure. The shapes of great coming changes were daily seen upon the horizon, and part of the community regarded as the portents of coming national destruction what others welcomed as the bright signs of approaching prosperity, education, and peace.

One coming change all men looked forward to with the conviction that it was near. The end of the reign was close at hand. The King's health and strength had wholly given way of late years, and it was beyond the reach of medical science to do much for the prolongation of his life, even if George had been the sort of man to give medical science any chance of doing much for him. Preparations, however, were still being made for his birthday celebration in April, and nothing was done by any official announcement to give strength to the general prevailing impression that the end was near at hand. When, on April 15, a bulletin was at last issued, it merely announced that the King was suffering from a bilious attack accompanied by a slight difficulty in breathing, but nothing was said to intimate that the King's physicians were in any alarm for the result. The royal physicians still kept issuing bulletins, but they were so vague in their terms that it is impossible to believe they were not made purposely deceptive. It would appear that King George, like many braver and better men, had a nervous objection to any admission by himself or on his behalf that there was the slightest reason for alarm as to the state of his health. Greville, who was then in Rome, notes on May 12 that: "Everybody here is in great alarm about the King, who I have no doubt is very ill." Then Greville adds, in characteristic fashion: "I am afraid he will die before I get home, and I should like to be in at the death, and see all the proceedings of a new reign." But he makes up his mind that he must not hurry his departure on the ground that "I shall probably never see Rome again, and I have a good chance of seeing at least one king more leave us."

Days and days went on and the public were still kept in doubt, until on May 24 a message was sent in the King's name to both Houses of Parliament to say that the King no longer found it convenient to sign State papers with his own hand, and hoped some means might be found for relieving him from the necessity of making any attempt to discharge the painful duty. This announcement made it clear enough to everybody that the King was in a very

weak condition, but there was naturally some difficulty about devising an entirely satisfactory method of dispensing him from the duty of appending his sign-manual to important documents. Not a very long time had passed away since the throne of England was nominally occupied by an insane sovereign. It was thought quite possible that insanity might show itself in the present King, and it was absolutely necessary that the utmost care should be taken to provide against any chance of the royal authority being misused by those who surrounded the sovereign. It was arranged, therefore, that the sign-manual should be affixed in the King's presence, and in obedience to his order given by word of mouth, and that the document thus stamped must be endorsed by three members of the Privy Council. All this was to be provided for by an Act of Parliament, and the Act was only to be in operation during the session then going on, in order that if the King's malady should last the renewal of the regular authority must be formally sought from the Legislature. The Bill for this purpose became law on May 28, and it remained in operation but for a very short time. On June 26, about three in the morning, the reign of George the Fourth came to an end. The death was sudden, even when we consider that there had been for some time no hope left of the King's recovery. George was sitting up in bed, and to all outward appearance was not any worse than he had been for some days before, when suddenly a startled expression came over his face, he leaned his head on the shoulder of one of his attendants, was heard to say, "O God, this is death," and then all was over.

The rupture of a blood-vessel proved to have been the immediate cause of death, but ossification of some of the vessels near the heart had begun years before and a complication of disorders had been gradually setting in. The King's mode of life was not one which gave him any chance of rallying against such disorders. He was reckless in his food and drink, and had long been in the way of cheering and stimulating himself by glasses of cherry-brandy taken at any moment of the day when the impulse came upon

him. Shortly before his death George made an earnest request to the Duke of Wellington, who was in constant attendance, that he should be buried in the night-shirt which he was wearing at the time. The Duke was somewhat surprised at this request, for one reason among others that the garment in question did not seem likely to commend itself as a shroud even to a sovereign less particular as to costume than George the Fourth had been. During his later years, however, as we learn from the testimony of Wellington himself, the King, who used to be the very prince of dandies where his outer garments were concerned, had got into the way of sleeping in uncleanly night-shirts and particularly dirty night-caps. When the King was dead, Wellington noticed that there was a red silk ribbon round his neck beneath the shirt. The ribbon was found to have attached to it a locket containing a tiny portrait of Mrs. Fitzherbert, perhaps the one only woman he had ever loved, perhaps, too, the woman he had most deeply wronged. It seemed that at one period of their love story the King and Mrs. Fitzherbert had exchanged small portraits, each covered by half a cut diamond, and no doubt there was an understanding that each should rest forever on the breast of its wearer.

Nothing in the story of George the Fourth's worthless and erring life is more discreditable and dishonorable to him than the manner in which he behaved to Mrs. Fitzherbert, and the utter falsehood of the denial which he had given to the reports that a marriage ceremony had taken place between them—a falsehood which, be it remembered, he had declared to Charles Fox upon his honor to be a truthful statement. The moralist may be a little puzzled how to make up his mind as to the bearing of this incident upon the character of George the Fourth. Does it relieve the murky gloom of George's life by one streak of light if we find that, after all, he did love Mrs. Fitzherbert to the last, and that in his dying moments he wished her portrait to go with him to the tomb? Or does it darken the stain upon the man's life to know that he really did love the woman whom nevertheless he could deliberately consign

to an infamous imputation? We do not know whether any writer of romance has ventured to introduce into his pages an incident and a problem such as those which are thus associated with the death-bed of George the Fourth. It is something to know that the King's brother, the Duke of Clarence, whom that death-bed had made King of England, was kind and generous to Mrs. Fitzherbert, and did all in his power to atone to her for the trials which her love and her royal lover had brought upon her life.

George was in his sixty-eighth year when he died. It would not be easy to find anywhere the story of a life which left so little of good to be remembered. George seems to have had some generous impulses now and then, and he probably did some kindly acts which could be set off against his many errors, imperfections, ignoble selfishnesses, and grave offences. But the record of his career as history gives it to us is that of a life almost absolutely surrendered to self-indulgence. It is only fair to remember when we consider all the unworthy acts of his manhood that the unwise and harsh restraints imposed upon him in his early years are accountable, at least to a certain extent, for the follies and the vices to which he yielded himself up when he became, as Byron says of one of his characters, "Lord of himself, that heritage of woe." Heritage of woe it certainly was in the case of George the Fourth. In his early manhood he appears to have had the gift of forming close friendships with men of genius and of noble impulse, but their example never told upon him, and as one cause or other removed them from his side his career bore with it no trace of their influence or their inspiration. No one ever seems to have loved him except Mrs. Fitzherbert alone, and we have seen how that love was repaid. Even those who were most devoted to him in his later years, because of their devotion to the royal house and to the State of which he was the representative, found themselves compelled to bear the heaviest testimony against his levity, his selfishness, his lack of conscience, his utter indifference to all the higher objects and purposes of life.

George must have had some natural talents and some

gifts of intellect, for he would otherwise not have chosen such friends as those whom in his better days he chose out and brought around him. We are told that he had marvellous powers of conversation, that he had a ready wit, and a keen insight into the humors and the weaknesses of those with whom he was compelled to associate. We are told that he could compete in repartee with the recognized wits of his time, and that he could shine as a talker even among men whose names still live in history because of their reputations as talkers. Of course it will naturally occur to the mind that the guests of the Prince Regent might be easily inclined to discover genuine wit in any repartee which came from the Prince Regent, but it is certain that some at least of the men who surrounded him were not likely to have been betrayed into admiration merely because of the rank of their royal entertainer. Burke was held to have spoken disparagingly of George when he described him as "brilliant but superficial." To one of Burke's deep thought and wide information a man might well have seemed superficial in whom others nevertheless believed that they saw evidences of intellect and understanding, but if Burke thought a man brilliant it is only reasonable to assume that that man's conversation must have had frequent flashes of brilliancy.

Undoubtedly George was capable sometimes of appreciating thoroughly the qualities of greatness in other men, but the appreciation never left any abiding influence upon his character or his career. He certainly did not make himself the cause of so much injury to the best interests of the State as George the Third had done, but it has also to be observed that when George the Third went wrong and obstinately maintained a wrongful course he was acting in dogged obedience to what he believed to be his conscience and the teachings of his creed. George the Fourth had absolutely no conscience and no law of life, and when he talked most vehemently and loudly about his coronation oath those who were accustomed to deal with him knew quite well from experience that when he had exhausted his humor by a

sufficient outpouring of eloquence he would be sure to take the advice given to him and to trouble himself no more about the question of conscience. In this way, of course, George the Fourth did less harm to the State than his father had done, but when we come to compare the moral character of the two men we must admit that the obstinacy of the father deserves the recognition which we cannot give to the spasmodic and ephemeral self-assertion of the son. Nobody for a moment believed that George the Fourth had the slightest idea of actually abdicating his royal position in England and betaking himself to perpetual boredom in Hanover rather than consent to the passing of Catholic Emancipation. But at times of trial those who were around George the Third had good reason to believe that if he were driven to choose between his throne and his conscience he would have come down deliberately from the throne and followed his conscience whithersoever it might lead him. With George the Fourth the only question was how long he would stand the wear and tear of having to defend his position, and how soon he would begin to feel that the inconvenience of giving in would be less troublesome than the inconvenience of holding out. Even the most courtly historian would be hard put to it if he were set to find out any passage in the whole of George the Fourth's matured life which compels admiration.

George seems to have been an absolutely self-centred man. He was to all appearance constitutionally unable to import into his mind any considerations but those which affected his own personal comforts and likings and indulgences and occasional love of display. There were times when he evidently thought he was acting a great part, and when it filled him with joy to believe that he was thus making himself an object of public admiration; but no higher consideration, no thought beyond him and the applause he believed himself to be winning, appear to have entered his mind even at such moments of exaltation. We read in history of princes who believed themselves qualified by nature to be great actors or great singers, and who made absurd exhibitions of themselves accordingly and accepted

the courtly and venal applause as genuine tributes to artistic genius. In the same way, and only in the same way, George the Fourth sometimes believed himself to be playing a great part, and it gratified his vanity to act the part out until it became tiresome to him and he found it a relief to go back to the ordinary delights of his easy, lazy, and sensuous nature. Perhaps the best that can be said of him is that he had possibly some gifts which under other conditions might have been turned to better account. Perhaps if he had had to work for a living, to make a career in life for himself, to depend for his success entirely on the steady use of his own best qualities, and to avoid the idleness and self-indulgence which would have condemned him to perpetual stint and poverty, he might have made a respectable name in some career where intelligence and application count for much. But a hard fortune had condemned him to be a king, and to begin by being the son of a king, and thus to find as the years went on increasing opportunity of gratifying all his meanest tastes and finding always around him the ready homage which accords its applause to the most ignoble caprices and the most wanton self-indulgence. The reign of George the Fourth saw great deeds and great men; it could have seen few men in all his realm less deserving a word of praise than George the Fourth.

The reign saw the beginning of many great enterprises in practical science, the uprising of many philanthropic combinations, and the first movements of political and social reform. It saw the earliest attempts made in a systematic way towards the spread of education among the multitude, and the close of many a bright career in literature and the arts. Bishop Heber died in 1826. The death of Byron has already been recorded in these pages, and at even an earlier period of the reign two other stars of the first magnitude in the firmament of literature ceased to shine upon the earth in bodily presence with the deaths of Keats and Shelley. John Kemble, probably the greatest English tragic actor from the days of Garrick to the uprising of Edmund Kean, died while George the Fourth was

King. Sir Thomas Lawrence, Flaxman, Fuseli, and Nollekens ceased to work for art. Sir Humphry Davy, Dugald Stewart, and Pestalozzi were lost to science. The reign saw the foundation of the Royal Society of Literature, which, to do him justice, George the Fourth helped to establish; the beginning of Mechanics' Institute, and the opening of some new parks and the Zoological Gardens. It is doubtful if the Thames Tunnel can be described as a really valuable addition to the triumphs of engineering, and it will perhaps be generally admitted that Buckingham Palace was not an artistic addition to the architectural ornaments of the metropolis. The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge was set on foot owing chiefly to the energy and the instincts of Henry Brougham.

We have seen how the foreign policy of Canning opened a distinctly new chapter in English history, and it may be observed that owing to the influence of that policy the principle of neutrality was maintained under difficult conditions, and even where the general sympathy of England went distinctly with one of the parties to a foreign dispute. This policy might well have been followed with credit and advantage to England on more than one critical occasion at a much later time. The reign saw the beginning of the movement towards free trade as a distinct international policy, and saw the removal of some of the most cramping and antiquated restrictions on the commerce of the kingdom and the colonies. The crusade against slavery and the slave-trade may be said to have begun its march in anything like organized form during this reign. The political principles which we now describe as Liberal became a new force in the State during the same time. The idea that even beneficent despotism can be counted on as an enduring or an endurable form of government began to die out, and the principle came to be more and more distinctly and loudly proclaimed that the best form of government must be not only for, but by, the people.

These things are in themselves enough to show that in the sphere of political and social reform as well as in that

of practical science the reign of George the Fourth was at least a reign of great beginnings. The student of history may perhaps draw an instructive and a moral lesson from the knowledge forced upon him of the fact which seems lamentable in itself that to the ruler of the State little or nothing was due for the achievements which give the reign its best claim to be honored in history. The reign of George the Fourth teaches us that in a country like modern England, while a good sovereign may do much to forward the intellectual, political, and social progress of the people, even the worst sovereign could no longer do much to retard it.

The Four Georges had come and gone. A famous epoch in English history had ended. Four princes of the same race, of the same name, had ruled in succession over the English people. Practically, the reigns of the four namesakes may be said to coincide with, to comprehend, and to represent the history of the eighteenth century in England. The reign of George the Fourth may be regarded as a survival from the eighteenth into the nineteenth century, as the reign of Anne was a survival from the seventeenth into the eighteenth century. In all the changes of that long and eventful age one change is very memorable and significant. The position of the dynasty was very different when George the Fourth died from what it was when his great-great-grandfather came over unwillingly from Germany to grasp the sceptre. When the Elector of Hanover became King of England, the Stuart party was still a power in political life and the Stuart cause the dearest hope of a very large number of devoted Englishmen. It might well be hard for men to realize in the days of George the Fourth that in the reign of the first George and in the reign of the second George the throne reeled beneath the blows which the armed adherents of the exiled Stuart princes struck at the supremacy of the sovereigns of the House of Brunswick. Even when the third George came to the throne there were still desperate dreamers who hoped against hope that something, anything, might happen which would allow the King—the King over the

water—to enjoy his own again. When the last of the Georges passed away, the Stuart cause had been buried for nearly half a century in that grave in Rome which encloses the remains of the last and perhaps the most unhappy of the Stuart princes.

WILLIAM THE FOURTH.

CHAPTER LXIX.

KING WILLIAM THE FOURTH.

William the Fourth, as the Duke of Clarence had now become, was nearing the completion of his sixty-fifth year when the death of his brother raised him to the throne. He had surely had full time in which to prepare himself for the business of a monarch, for during a long period it was well known that nothing was likely to stand between him and the succession except the life of his elder brother, the Duke of York. But William's tastes did not allure him to any study of the duties which belonged to a throne. The Navy was assigned to him as a profession, and he actually saw some service in America and in the West Indies, but he obtained his promotion as a matter of course until he reached the position of Lord High Admiral, which may be described as the main-top of his naval career. The story is told of him, and will probably, whether it be accurate or not, be told as long as his history comes under public recollection, that he had something to do with the promotion of the great naval battle of Navarino, which led to the emancipation of Greece. The combined fleets of England, France, and Russia, under command of Admiral Sir Edward Codrington, were watching the Turkish and Egyptian fleets, in order to protect Greece against them. But the actual course to be taken by the allies was supposed to depend upon many serious political considerations. The British Admiralty issued a solemn official despatch to Sir Edward Codrington, enjoining on him the necessity of great care and caution in any action he might take. This

document was forwarded in due course by the Lord High Admiral, and the story goes that the Duke of Clarence scribbled at the end of it in his own hand the encouraging words, "Go it, Ned." Whether it was fought under this inspiration or not, it is certain that the battle was fought, that the Turkish and Egyptian fleets were destroyed, and that the independence of Greece was won.

The English public generally would have been none the less inclined to welcome the accession of the Duke of Clarence as William the Fourth even although it had been part of authentic history that the new King had lately borne an important, if an underhand, part in the rescue of Greece from Ottoman oppression. But there was little else in the career of the Duke of Clarence to command popular respect or affection. He had lived openly, or almost openly, for many years with the celebrated actress Mrs. Jordan, who had borne him ten children, and this connection had been made the subject of free and frank allusion in some of the verses of Robert Burns. The British public, however, were inclined, as Robert Burns was, to look forgivingly on the doings of the Prince, for he was still a young man when his acquaintance with Mrs. Jordan began. The British public liked him because he was a sailor, if for nothing else, and men's eyes turned hopefully to him when it became apparent that not much good was any longer to be looked for from George the Fourth. In 1818 William married the eldest daughter of the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen, and had two daughters, both of whom died in their infancy. The Duke of Clarence had been noted, during the greater part of his career, for his roughness of manner, and many anecdotes of him were spread about which might have suited well the fun of some historian belonging to the school of Brantôme, or some compiler of memoirs after the fashion of Saint-Simon. Still he was the Sailor King, and England had always, and naturally, loved sailors; and "go to then," as might have been said in the days of Shakespeare, what further explanation could be needed of the fact that William the Fourth opened his career of royalty under favoring aus-

pices? It might seem to the mind of some philosophical observer rather hard to get into transports of enthusiasm about a new monarch aged sixty-five who during all his previous career had done nothing of which to be particularly proud, and had done many things of which a respectable person in private life would have felt heartily ashamed. Still, the Duke of Clarence had become William the Fourth, and was on the throne, and great things might possibly be expected from him even yet, although he was pretty well stricken in years. At all events, he was not George the Fourth. So the public of these countries was in the mood to make the best of him, and give him a loyal welcome, and wait for events with the comfortable faith that even at sixty-five a man may begin a new life, and find time and heart and intellect to do things of which no promise whatever had been given during all his earlier years.

William had been supposed up to the time of his accession to lean towards the Whig, or what we should now call the Liberal party. His manners were frank, familiar, and even rough. He cared little for Court ceremonial of any kind, and was in the habit of walking about the streets with his umbrella tucked under his arm, like any ordinary Londoner. All this told rather in his favor, so far as the outer public were concerned. There was supposed to be something rather English, something rather typical of John Bull in the easy-going manners of the new sovereign, which gave people an additional reason for welcoming him. The new sovereign, however, had come in for times of popular excitement, and even of trouble. There came a new revolution in France—only a dynastic revolution, to be sure, and not a national upheaval, but still it was a change which dethroned the newly restored legitimate line of sovereigns. The elder branch of the Bourbons was torn away and flung aside. There were to be no more kings of France, but only kings of the French. Charles the Tenth was deposed, and Louis Philippe, son of Philippe Egalité, was placed on the throne. Charles the Tenth was the last of the legitimate kings of France so far, and there does not

seem much chance in the immediate future for any restoration of the fallen dynasty.

The overthrow of legitimacy in France had a strong effect on popular opinion in England. It was plain that Charles the Tenth and his system had come to ruin because the sovereign and his ministers would not move with the common movement of the times over the greater part of the European continent, and popular reformers in England took care that the lesson should not be thrown away over here. Great changes had been accomplished by popular movements even during the enfeebling and disheartening reign of George the Fourth. Great progress had been made towards the establishment of religious equality, or at all events towards the removal of religious disqualifications among the Dissenters and the Roman Catholics. There was a loud cry almost everywhere for some measure of political reform. The conditions of the country had been gradually undergoing a great change. England had been becoming less and less dependent for her prosperity on her mere agricultural resources, and had been growing more and more into a great manufacturing community. Huge towns like Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Birmingham, and Sheffield were arising in the Northern and Midland regions. Liverpool was superseding Bristol as the great seaport of commercial traffic. Yet in most cases the old-fashioned principle still prevailed which in practice confined the Parliamentary representation of the country to the members who sat for the counties, and for what were called the pocket boroughs. The theory of the Constitution, as it was understood, held that the sovereign summoned at his own discretion and pleasure the persons whom he thought best qualified to form a House of Commons, to consult with him as to the government of the empire. The sovereign for this purpose conferred the right of representation on this or that town, or district, or county, according as he thought fit, and this arrangement had gone on from generation to generation. Now it sometimes happened that a place that had been comparatively popular and prosperous at the period when it obtained the

right of representation had seen its prosperity and its population gradually ebb away from it, and leave it little better than a bare hill-side, and yet the bare hill-side retained the right of representation, and its owner could send any one he pleased into the House of Commons. There were numberless illustrations of this curious anomaly all over the country. The great families of landed proprietors naturally monopolized among them the representation of the counties, and many of them enjoyed also the ownership of the small decaying or totally decayed boroughs which still retained the right of returning members to Parliament. On the other hand, the development of manufacturing energy had caused the growth of great and populous towns and cities, and most of these towns and cities were actually without representation or the right of representation in the House of Commons. Thus a condition of things had arisen which was certain to prove itself incompatible with the spread of education and the growth of public interest in all great questions of domestic reform.

We have already seen in this history how the Whig party in Parliament, and the popular agitators out of Parliament, had long been rousing the national intelligence and the national conscience to a sense of the growing necessity for some complete change in all that concerned the representation of the people. The Duke of Wellington was at the head of the Administration when George the Fourth died and William came to the throne. The new King, as has been said, was supposed to have Liberal inclinations as regarded political questions, and there was a common expectation that he might begin his reign by summoning a new set of ministers. The King, however, did nothing of the kind. He sent messages to the Duke of Wellington telling him, in his usual familiar and uncouth way, that he had always liked the Duke uncommonly well, and did not see any reason why he should not keep him on as his Prime Minister. This was, to begin with, a disappointment to the majority of the public. The first royal speech from the throne contained other matter of disappointment. There was great distress all over the

country. The enormous expense of the long wars was still making itself felt in huge taxation. The condition of agriculture was low, and many districts were threatened with something like famine. Trade was suffering from the reaction which always follows a long and exhausting war. It was confidently expected that the royal speech would take some account of the widespread national distress and would foreshadow some measures to deal with it. The speech, however, said nothing on the subject. Then there was another omission which created much dissatisfaction and even some alarm. The speech made no mention of any measures to be taken for the establishment of a regency in the event of the King's death. The King was sixty-five years old, and had led a life which even the most loyal and hopeful of his subjects could not regard with confidence as likely to give promise of a long reign. Now the heir-presumptive to the throne was the Princess Alexandrina Victoria, a child then only eleven years old. The Princess Victoria, as she was commonly called, was the daughter of the Duke of Kent, the fourth son of George the Third. Any attack of illness, any serious accident, might bring the life of King William to a sudden close, and then if no previous arrangement had been made for a regency Parliament and the country might be involved in some confusion.

There was one very grave and even ominous condition which had to be taken into account. If the King were to die suddenly, and with no provision made for a regency, the girl, perhaps the child, who succeeded him would in the ordinary course of things be left under the guardianship of her eldest uncle, the Duke of Cumberland. Now it is only stating a simple fact to say that the Duke of Cumberland was then the most unpopular man in England. He was not merely unpopular, he was an object of common dread and detestation. He was regarded as a reckless profligate and an unprincipled schemer. There must have been much exaggeration about some of the tales that were told and accepted concerning him, for it is hard to believe that at a time so near to our own a prince of

the Royal House of England could have lived a life the story of which might seem to have belonged to the worst days of the Lower Empire. But, whatever allowance be made for exaggeration, it is certain that the Duke of Cumberland was almost universally hated, and that many people seriously considered him quite capable of any plot or any crime which might secure his own advancement to the throne. Sanguine persons, indeed, saw a gleam of hope in the fact that the Duke of Cumberland was in any case the heir to the crown of Hanover. In the House of Hanover the succession is confined to the male line, and the Princess Victoria had nothing to do with it. The hope, therefore, was that the Duke of Cumberland would be content with the prospect of his succession to the throne of Hanover, and that when the time arrived for him to become King of Hanover he would betake himself to his new kingdom and trouble England no more. Still the fact remained that just as yet he was not King of Hanover, and that if no proper provisions were made against a contingency he might become the guardian of the girl, or the child, who was to succeed William the Fourth on the English throne.

King William, however, did not trouble himself much about all these considerations. He did not see any reason why people should expect him to die all of a sudden, and he could hardly be got to give any serious attention to the question of a regency. It was then part of the constitutional practice of the monarchy that a dissolution of Parliament should take place when a new sovereign had come to the throne. The practice has since ceased to be a part of our constitutional usages, but in the days when William the Fourth came to the throne it was a matter of course. The King, for some reason or other, was anxious that a dissolution should take place as soon as possible. It may be that he was merely desirous to find out how far the existing Ministry had the support of the country, although it does not seem quite likely that William's intelligence could have carried him so near to the level of statesmanship as to make this elementary question a mat-

ter of consideration in his mind. The King's principal ministers were the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel. The most powerful among the leaders of Opposition were Charles, Earl Grey, in the House of Lords and Henry Brougham and Lord John Russell in the House of Commons. There was some doubt as to the position which might be taken up by Canning and Huskisson and their friends. Some of the Tories believed that they might be won over to support the Duke of Wellington, in order to assist him in counteracting the efforts of the more ardent and liberal reformers, like Grey and Brougham and Russell. Fate soon settled the question so far at least as Huskisson was concerned. The opening of the line of railway from Liverpool to Manchester, the first line of any considerable length completed in England, took place on September 15, 1830. The Duke of Wellington, Sir Robert Peel, and Huskisson were among the distinguished visitors who were present at the opening of the railway. The friends alike of the Prime Minister and of the great expert in finance were anxious that the two should come together on this occasion, and make a personal if not a political reconciliation. The train stopped at a station; the Duke and Huskisson both got out, and were approaching to meet each other, the Duke holding out his hand, when an alarm was raised about the approach of a locomotive. A rush was made for the carriages, and in the confusion Huskisson was struck down by an open door in the moving train, and suffered such injuries that his death almost immediately followed. Huskisson was, beyond doubt, one of the most enlightened statesmen of his time in all that concerned the financial arrangements of the country. He might have been called a Liberal, just as we might call Canning a Liberal, when we think of the general direction taken by the policy of either man.

The dissatisfaction with which the speech from the throne was received found its expression in no severer form, so far at least as Parliament was concerned, than a motion by Lord Grey in the one House, and Lord Althorp in the other, for a short delay to enable both Houses to

consider the address in reply to the royal speech. It was made evident that the delay sought for had to do with the question of a regency, concerning which, as has been said, the King had not troubled himself to make any announcement. Now the constitutional system of England had taken no account, except through the provision of a regency, of the fact that a child might become sovereign of the realm. Therefore, if Parliament did not establish a regency during the lifetime of King William, and if the King were soon to die through any accident or malady, the child Princess would come to the throne under no further constitutional restraints than those which belonged to the position of a full-grown sovereign. There was another trouble, however, and one of still graver political importance, awaiting the Ministry of the Duke of Wellington.

Henry Brougham gave notice in the House of Commons that on an early day he would bring forward a motion to raise the whole question of reform in the representative system of the country. Brougham, at this time, was regarded as the most strenuous and powerful champion of reform in the House of Commons. Lord John Russell had not yet had an opportunity of proving how steadfast were his principles as a reformer, and how great were the Parliamentary gifts which he had brought to the main purpose of his life. Moreover, Lord John Russell never had any of the kind of eloquence which made Brougham so powerful in and out of Parliament. Brougham on a popular platform could outdo the most stormy mob orator of the time. He was impassioned, boisterous, overwhelming to a degree of which we can find no adequate illustration even in the most tumultuous Trafalgar Square demonstrations of our later days. Even in the House of Commons, and afterwards in what might be regarded as the deadening atmosphere of the House of Lords, Brougham was accustomed to shout and storm and gesticulate, to shake his fist and stamp, after a fashion which was startling even in those days, and of which now we have no living illustration. Brougham was at this time almost at the very zenith of his popularity among the reformers all over the country,

and more especially in the North of England. When, therefore, Brougham announced that he was determined at the earliest opportunity to raise the whole question of reform in the House of Commons it became evident that the new reign was destined to open with a momentous and long constitutional struggle, a struggle that might be counted upon to mark an epoch in the history of England. The news that the French legitimate monarchy had fallen and that Louis Philippe reigned as King of the French—King of the barricades he was commonly called—came in time to quicken men's hopes and animate their passions for the approaching trial of strength between the old forms and the new spirit.

The Government refused to agree to the one day's delay which was asked for by the leaders of Opposition. On a division being taken there was a majority for Ministers in both Houses, and the Duke of Wellington had scored thus far. He had shown that he was personally determined not to concede any point to the Opposition, and he had secured a victory. Parliament was dissolved within a few days and the country was plunged into a general election. At that time, it should be remembered, an election was a very different sort of event from that which bears the same name at the present day. An election contest could then, according to the extent and nature of the constituency, run on for a time not exceeding fifteen days, and it was accompanied by a practice of bribery, lavish, open, shameless, and profligate, such as is totally unknown to our more modern times, and such as our habits and feelings, no more than our laws, would tolerate. Intimidation and violence were also parts of every fiercely contested election, and those whom the law excluded from any part in the struggle as electors were apt to find, in that very exclusion, only another reason for taking part in it by the use of physical force. Just at the time which we are now describing there are many conditions which made a general election likely to be especially stormy and turbulent.

The distress which prevailed throughout the country had in many districts called up a spirit of something like

desperation, which exhibited itself in a crime of almost entire novelty, the burning of hayricks on farms. This offence became so widespread throughout large parts of the country that it gave rise to theories about an organized conspiracy against property which was supposed to be, in some vague sort of way, an outcome of the socialistic excesses which had taken place during the French Revolution and had been revived by the more recent commotions in France. The probability is that the rick-burning offences were, in the first instance, the outcome of sheer despair seeking vengeance anywhere and anyhow for its own sufferings, and then of the mere passion for imitation in crime which finds some manner of illustration here and there at all periods of history. However that may be, it is certain that the offences became very common, that they were punished with merciless severity, and that the gallows was kept in constant operation.

Now, it may be taken almost as a political axiom that whenever there is great distress at the time of a general election it is certain to give rise to some feeling of hostility against a Ministry, especially if the Ministry had been for any length of time in power. A considerable portion of the Tories had been turned against the Duke of Wellington because, under the advice of Sir Robert Peel, he had yielded at last to the demand for Catholic Emancipation, even although, as Peel and the Duke himself declared, the concession had been made merely as a choice between Catholic Emancipation and civil war. Some influential Tories all over the country were asking whether Ireland had been pacified or had shown herself in the least degree grateful because an instalment of religious freedom had been granted to the Roman Catholics, and they insisted that the Duke had surrendered the supremacy of the Established Church to no purpose. It was certain, indeed, that O'Connell had not, in the slightest degree, slackened the energy of his political movement because the emancipating Act had been passed. Among the opponents of reform, at all times, there are some who seem to hold that the granting of one reform ought to be enough to put a stop to all demands for any

other, and that it is mere ingratitude on the part of a man who has just obtained permission to follow his own form of worship if he wants also to be put on an equality with his neighbors as regards the assertion of his political opinions. Therefore, the Ministry found, as the elections went on, that they had not merely all the reformers against them, but that a certain proportion of those who, in the ordinary condition of things, would have been their supporters were estranged from them merely because they had, under whatever pressure, consented to introduce any manner of reform.

When the elections were over it seemed to reasonable observers very doubtful indeed whether King William, however well inclined, would be able to retain for any length of time the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel as the leading advisers of the Crown. The country just then may be described as in a state of transition from one constitutional system to another. It was growing more clear, day by day, that the time had gone by when the sovereign could hold to any one particular minister, or set of ministers, in defiance of the majority in the representative chamber and the strength of public opinion out-of-doors. On the other hand, the time had not yet arrived when the system introduced and established by the present reign could be relied upon as part of the Constitution, and the sovereign could be trusted to accept, without demur, the judgment of the House of Commons as to the choice of his ministers. The new Parliament was opened on November 5, and the Royal Speech gave but little satisfaction to reformers of any class. It contained no recommendation of constitutional reform, and indeed congratulated the whole population on having the advantage of living under so faultless a political system. It concerned itself in no wise about the distress that existed in the country, except that it expressed much satisfaction at the manner in which the criminal laws had been called into severe action for the repression of offences against property.

The King conceded so much to public opinion as to recommend the appointment of a regency, in order to

make provision for the possibility of his life being cut short; but even this was only done in a fashion that seemed to say, "If you really will have it that I am likely to die soon you may humor yourselves by taking any course that seems to satisfy your scruples—it is not worth my while to interfere with your whims." The reformers therefore had clearly nothing to expect so far as the Royal Speech could deal with expectations. But they found that they had still less to expect from the intentions of the Ministry.

In the debate on the address, in reply to the speech from the throne, Lord Grey took occasion to ask for some exposition of Ministerial policy with regard to reform of the representative system. Then the Duke of Wellington delivered a speech which may be described as unique in its way. It would be impossible to put into words any statement more frankly opposed to all Parliamentary reform. The greatest orator that ever lived, the profoundest judge who ever laid down the law to a jury, could not have prepared a statement more comprehensive and more exact as a condemnation of all reform than that which the victor of Waterloo was able to enunciate with all confidence and satisfaction. He laid it down that it would be utterly beyond the power of the wisest political philosopher to devise a Constitution so near to absolute perfection as that with which Englishmen living in the reign of his present Majesty, William the Fourth, had been endowed by the wisdom of their ancestors. He affirmed that he had never heard any suggestion which contained the slightest promise of an improvement on that Constitution. He repeated, in various forms of repetition, that Englishmen already possessed all the freedom that it was good for men to have, that the rights of all classes were equally maintained, that the happiness of every one was secured, so far as law could secure it, and that the only thing for reasonable Englishmen to do was to open their eyes and recognize the advantages conferred upon them by the Constitution under which they were happy enough to live.

The Duke of Wellington probably knew nothing of Vol-

taire's philosopher who maintained that everything was for the best in this best of all possible worlds, but he seemed to be pervaded by the same sentiment of complete satisfaction when he contemplated the British Constitution. Finally, he declared that, so far from having any intention to touch with irreverent hand that sacred political structure for the vain purpose of improvement, he was determined to resist to the uttermost of his power every effort to interfere with the constitutional arrangements which had done so much for the prosperity and the glory of the empire. We do not quote the exact words of the Duke of Wellington's speech, but we feel sure we are giving a faithful version of the meaning which he intended to convey and succeeded very clearly in conveying. The Duke of Wellington was undoubtedly one of the greatest soldiers the world has ever seen. As a soldier of conquest he was not indeed to be compared with an Alexander, a Cæsar, or a Napoleon, but as a soldier of defence he has probably never had a superior. As an administrator, too, he had shown immense capacity both in India and in Europe, and had more than once brought what seemed absolute chaos into order and shape. But he had no gift for the understanding of politics, and it was happy for him, at more than one crisis of his career, that he was quite aware of his own political incapacity and was ready to defer to the judgment of other men who understood such things better than he did. We have already seen how he accepted the guidance of Peel when it became necessary to yield the claim for Catholic Emancipation, and he was commonly in the habit of saying that Peel understood all such matters better than he could pretend to. He was not, therefore, the minister who would ruin a State or bring a State into revolution by obstinate adhesion to his own views in despite of every advice and every warning, and no doubt when he was delivering his harangue against all possible schemes of reform he felt still convinced that he was merely expressing the unalterable opinion of Peel and every other loyal subject whose judgment ought to prevail with a law-abiding people.

In the House of Commons Brougham gave notice that on an early day he would bring forward a motion on the subject of political reform. Thus, therefore, the trumpet of battle was sounded on both sides. The struggle must now be fought out to the end. Nothing, however, could be done until the Ministry had been driven from office, and it was not by any means certain that in the House of Commons, as it was then constituted, a direct vote on the question of reform would end in a defeat of the Duke of Wellington's Government. Something that seemed almost like an accident brought about a crisis sooner than had been anticipated. Sir Henry Parnell brought forward a motion for the appointment of a select committee to inquire into, and report upon, the estimates and amounts submitted by his Majesty with regard to the civil service. This motion had the support of the Liberal leaders and was strongly opposed by the Government. No one could have been surprised at the opposition offered by the Government, for Sir Henry Parnell's was just the sort of motion which every Ministry is sure to oppose. A government prepares its own estimates, and is not apt to be in favor of the appointment of an outside committee to inquire into their amount and their appropriation. Still, the whole question was not one to be regarded as of capital imporance in ordinary times, and therefore, although the debate was one of great interest both inside and outside the House of Commons, it did not seem likely to lead to any momentous and immediate consequences.

Sir Henry Parnell was a man of ability and character, and was regarded in the House as an authority on financial questions. He belonged to the family of Parnell the poet, the friend of Swift and Pope, and he afterwards became the first Lord Congleton, taking his title from that part of Cheshire where the poet and his ancestors had lived. In years, much later years, that belonged to our own times another member of the Parnell family made for himself a conspicuous place in the House of Commons and in Imperial politics, the late Charles Stewart Parnell, the famous leader of the Irish National party. Sir Henry Par-

nell carried his motion by a majority of twenty-nine in the House of Commons.

Now in the ordinary course of things there was nothing in such an event to compel the resignation of a Ministry. It would have been quite reasonable for any Government to express a willingness to meet the wishes of the House on such a subject, to agree to the appointment of a committee, and then go on as if nothing particular had occurred. But it sometimes happens that a Government is willing, or even anxious, to accept defeat on a side issue, although of minor importance, in order to escape from, or at all events to postpone, a decision on some question of vital import. Sometimes, too, there are reasons, well known to all members of a Government but not yet in the knowledge of the public, which incline a Ministry to find a reason for resigning office in the result of some casual division which cannot be said to amount to a vote of want of confidence. Not many years have passed since a Liberal Government, which might have seemed to ordinary observers to be secure in its position, thought it well to accept a vote on the supply of cordite in the army stores as a vote of want of confidence, and accordingly went out of office. The Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel appear to have come to the conclusion that the success of Sir Henry Parnell's motion would furnish them with a plausible excuse for withdrawing at a convenient moment from an unpromising position. Henry Brougham, as we have already said, had given formal notice in the House of Commons that he would bring forward a motion for leave to introduce a definite scheme of Parliamentary reform. Now everybody knew that Brougham was at that time thoroughly earnest on the subject of reform, and that he had, during the recent general election, the best possible reasons for knowing that the great majority in the North of England, at all events, was behind him. On the other hand, ministers themselves had had ample opportunities of finding out, during the elections, that a large number of those whom at other times they might have regarded as their own supporters were estranged from them or had actually turned

against them. The Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel probably thought that their wisest course would be to let Lord Grey and Brougham and their friends try what they could do with the monstrous spectre of reform which they had conjured up, and wait till the country had recovered its senses before again undertaking to act as ministers of the Crown.

An odd and rather absurd incident, which created much scandal and alarm at the time, and soon passed out of public recollection, had helped no doubt to bring the Duke of Wellington and Peel to their decision. The King and Queen had been invited to dine with the Lord Mayor and the Corporation at the Guildhall on November 9, and had accepted the invitation. The Duke of Wellington and the other ministers were to be among the guests.

Shortly before the appointed day the Duke of Wellington got a letter from the Lord Mayor-elect, telling him that he had received private information about some mysterious organized attempt to be made against the Duke himself on the occasion of his visit to the City, and urging the Duke to have the streets well guarded with soldiers, in order to prevent the success of any such lawless and atrocious enterprise. Now the Duke was not a man to care much, personally, about an alarm of this kind, but he thought it would be rather an unseemly spectacle if the streets of the City had to be guarded by troops when the new sovereign went to be the guest of the Lord Mayor at the Guildhall. The attempt, to be sure, was said to be directed against the Duke himself and not against the King; but still it would hardly do, it would scarcely have a happy effect on public opinion at home and abroad, if the first visit of the Sailor King, the popular William, to the City were to be made the occasion of a murderous attack on the King's Prime Minister. It might get into the public mind that what had happened in Paris was likely to happen in London, and the effect on Europe might be most damaging to the credit of the country. So the banquet was put off; the sovereign and his Prime Minister did not visit the City. A vague panic raged everywhere,

and the Funds went alarmingly down. The story which had impressed the Lord Mayor-elect was in all likelihood only a mere scare. But it had, no doubt, some effect in deciding the action of the Ministry. At all events, the Duke of Wellington and his colleagues determined to try what strength the reformers had behind them. They tendered their resignation; the King was prevailed upon to accept it, and it was announced to Parliament and the public that the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel were no longer in office.

CHAPTER LXX.

LE ROI D'YVETOT.

We may turn for a moment from the path of politics to mention a fact that is worth mentioning, if only because of the immense difference between the accepted usages of that time and any usages that would be possible in our days. King William shortly after his accession created his eldest son Earl of Munster, and conferred upon all his other sons and daughters the rank that belongs to the younger children of a marquis. The King's living children, as has been said before, were all illegitimate. In raising them to the rank of the peerage King William was only following the example of many or most of his predecessors. People thought none the less of him, at the time, because he had bestowed such honor upon his progeny. Charles Greville, the famous Clerk of the Council to George the Fourth and William the Fourth, describes the new sovereign with characteristic frankness and lack of reverence. "Altogether," says Greville, writing about a fortnight after the King's accession, "he seems a kind-hearted, well-meaning, not stupid, burlesque, bustling old fellow, and if he doesn't go mad may make a very decent king, but he exhibits oddities."

The early bringing-up of the new King had certainly not tended much to fill him with the highest aspirations or to qualify him for the most dignified duties of royalty. "Never," says Greville, "was elevation like that of King William the Fourth. His life has hitherto been passed in obscurity and neglect, in miserable poverty, surrounded by a numerous progeny of bastards, without consideration or friends, and he was ridiculous from his grotesque ways and little, meddling curiosity."

He appears to have been a man of rather kindly, and certainly not ungenerous, disposition, and it is decidedly to his credit, in one sense, that the expectations of most of the Whigs were disappointed when he came to the throne. During his career in the Navy he had a way of disregarding orders, and when in command of a squadron would sometimes take his own vessel on an expedition according to his own fancy, and leave the remainder of the vessels under his charge to do as well as they could without him until it pleased him to return. Some of his later exploits in this way drew down on him a marked expression of disapproval from the Duke of Wellington, then at the head of the Government, and for this reason it was thought by many, when William came to the throne, that he would be sure to dismiss from his service the Prime Minister who once had offended him so deeply. A man with a more malevolent turn of mind would very likely have acted as public expectation seemed to foreshadow, but William, as we have seen, soon made it clear that he had no fault to find with the Duke of Wellington, that he cherished no ill-will and was quite ready to let bygones be bygones. There can be no doubt that William, although he had no great defects of any deep or serious nature, no defects at least which are not common enough among the sovereigns of his time, was yet as undignified a figure for a throne as even the modern comic opera itself could imagine.

He was eccentric to a degree that sometimes seemed to suggest a lurking tendency to insanity. He was fussy, garrulous, excitable, noisy, overbearing, apt to take strong likes and dislikes and to express his likings and his dislikings with an utter disregard for the accepted conventionalities of social life.

He could explode at a moment's notice into a burst of rage which sometimes made itself felt for hours, and perhaps when the next day came he had forgotten all about it and greeted those who were its especial objects with hilarious good-humor. There were many anecdotes told about him in the days not long before his accession to the throne which were commonly believed by those who knew him,

and which it would not be possible to reproduce in the modest pages suitable to our own times.

Now it would certainly be most unfair to accept every story told by gossip about some exalted personage as a story worthy of credit and qualified to take its place in authentic history, but, at the same time, it is quite fair and reasonable when forming an estimate of the exalted personage's character to take some account of the sayings of contemporary gossip. We may be sure that there were stories told about the father of Frederick the Great, about Catherine of Russia, about a late King of Bavaria, which were not true, but none the less the historian is undoubtedly helped to form an estimate of the ways and doings of these exalted personages by the collective testimony of the stories that are told about them and believed in their own time. William the Fourth could not, when he ascended the throne, suddenly shake off all the rough manners and odd ways which he had allowed himself to foster during his long career as a Prince of the Blood Royal, as a sailor, and as a man much given to the full indulgence of his humors, whatever they might happen to be.

After he had become King, and it was part of his royal duty to give great State dinners, it was sometimes his way to behave himself on the occasions of those festivities after a fashion which even W. S. Gilbert never could have caricatured in any "Mikado" or other such piece of delightful burlesque. The King was fond of making speeches at his State dinners, and it was his way to ramble along on all manner of subjects in the same oration. Whatever idea happened to come uppermost in his mind he usually blurted out, without the slightest regard for time, place, or company. This habit of his became very embarrassing now and then when some of the ambassadors of great European States happened to be guests at his dinner-table. In the presence of the French Ambassador, for instance, the King, while delivering his after-dinner speech, would suddenly recall some of his recollections of the days when the great Napoleon held the Imperial throne of France, and he would then, perhaps, close a sentence

with an exultant reference to the glorious triumphs we had obtained over our enemies the French.

On one occasion when Leopold, King of the Belgians, was dining with him the King suddenly observed that his royal guest was drinking water, and he called to him with an oath and demanded what he was drinking that sort of stuff for; and not content with the poor King's plea that he drank water because he liked it better than wine, William insisted that, in his house at least, his royal brother must swallow the juice of the grape. One day when Talleyrand was among his guests King William favored the company with a very peculiar sort of speech, and he concluded the speech by proposing a toast which is described by those who heard it as utterly unsuited for publication. One of the guests was Charles Greville. He was anxious to know what impression this extraordinary performance had made upon Talleyrand. He asked Talleyrand in a whisper if he had ever heard anything like that before. But Talleyrand, who had listened to the oration and the toast with unmoved composure, was not to be thrown off his balance or drawn into any expression of opinion by an indiscreet question. He merely answered that it was certainly "bien remarquable."

The Duchess of Kent and the young Princess Victoria were dining with the King one day, and some of the guests, although not all, were well aware that there had been differences of opinion lately between William and his sister-in-law. The guests, however, were amazed indeed when the King rose and delivered a speech in which he raked up all his old grievances against the Duchess of Kent, and complained of her and denounced her as if he were the barrister, the hero of the old familiar story, who, having no case, is advised to abuse the plaintiff's attorney. The child Princess Victoria is said to have been so distressed by some parts of this unexpected oration that she burst into tears; but the Duchess, her mother, retained self-control, and sat as composedly silent as if the King had been taking his part in some dignified State ceremonial.

King William sometimes broke the conventionalities of royal deportment in a quite different sort of way, in a way which undoubtedly shocked the traditional sensibilities of the older officials of the Court, but with which the lovers of modern and more simple manners are inclined sometimes, perhaps, to have a sort of wilful sympathy. He would sometimes insist on dropping some great royal visitor from abroad at the door of his hotel, just as if he were an ordinary London resident giving a lift in his carriage to a friend from the country. At the most solemn State ceremonial he would bustle about irresponsibly, and talk in a loud voice to any one who might seem to him at the moment to be an attractive person with whom to have a pleasant chat. It might happen that some great State functionary or some dignified ambassador from a foreign capital, who ought to have been spoken to long before, was kept waiting until the unconcerned sovereign had had his talk out with some comparatively insignificant personage who had been known to the King in former days, and whose appearance brought with it certain early and jovial associations. Many of the King's minor offences in this way seem now to the unconcerned reader about as venial as that by which Marie Antoinette in her early Court days broke through the established rules of etiquette among the ladies of her bedchamber by snatching her chemise one morning with her own hands instead of allowing it to pass in its regular order from the lowest to the highest degree of the attendant women. But it certainly was perhaps a little too much of a departure from the usages of a Court when the monarch, about to sign an important document in the presence of his State Council, flung down the quill with which he had begun to write and proclaimed it to be a damned bad pen.

Every day the King was sure to astonish those around him by some breach of Court conventionality, little or great. He was liable to strong likings and dislikings, and he took no pains to conceal his sentiments in either case. He seems to have had an affectionate regard for his young niece, the Princess Victoria, and a strong dislike to her

mother. The Duchess of Kent would appear to have had no particular liking for him, and she very much objected to be brought into familiar association with the sons and daughters of the eccentric sovereign. Perhaps it is not to William's discredit that he always treated these children as if they were his legitimate descendants. It was no fault of theirs if the ceremony of marriage had not preceded their coming into the world, and the King apparently did not see why even the most righteous person should feel any objection to their frequent presence. But one can understand that the Duchess of Kent must have often wished that the sense of public decorum, which was even already growing up in English society, should not be shocked by the too frequent reminder that the King had several children who were not born in wedlock. Béranger, the once popular French lyric poet, satirized a certain royal personage, a contemporary of William the Fourth, as the King of Yvetot. There was a French legend which told of the conditions under which the descendants of a certain lord of the manor in Brittany had been created by Clotaire kings of Yvetot. Béranger's monarch is described by him as one having made little mark of his own in history, who could live very comfortably without troubling himself about glory, and who liked to be crowned with a simple cotton nightcap. This monarch, the poet tells us, could enjoy his four meals a day, and liked very often to lift his glass to his lips.

There are many reasons, we are told, why some of his subjects might have called him a father to his people, but the name was not applied by the poet in the ordinary metaphorical sense of the word. He never desired to trouble his neighbors, and never disturbed his mind with any projects for the increase of his dominions, and, like a true model to all potentates, found his ambition quite satisfied in the indulgence of his own pleasures while desiring as little as possible to interfere with the pastimes of his people. Every verse of the ballad ends by telling us what a good little king was this sovereign of Yvetot. With certain slight alterations Béranger's satirical verses might

have served as a picture of William the Fourth. But our good little King of Yvetot was not destined altogether to have quite an easy time of it, although he was more successful in that way than the monarch for whom Béranger intended his satire. William had come in for the age of reform. The whole course of English history hardly tells us of any reign, of anything like equal length, into which so many reforms were crowded. William the Fourth, we may be sure, would never have troubled himself or any of his subjects about any projects of improvement in the political or social conditions of his realm. He would have been quite content to let things go on just as they had been going in the days before he came to the throne, and would probably have asked no higher title of affection from the loyalty of his subjects than the familiar name that they gave him of the Sailor King. When for a while he began to be called the Patriot King he must have associated the title with a sense of all the worry and trouble brought upon him by the incessant preparation of patriotic projects for the improvement of everything all over the country.

It seems like a curious freak of fate that such a sovereign, at such a time, should have had to get rid of the Duke of Wellington and accept Lord Grey as his Prime Minister. The Duke of Wellington was himself simple, plain, and occasionally rough in manners, with little taste for Court ceremonial and little inclination for the exchange of stately phrase and inflated language. There are many anecdotes told of Wellington which show that he had no more liking or aptitude for the ways dear to a Court functionary than King William himself had. Lord Grey was a man of the most stately bearing and the most refined style. His manner was courtly without the slightest affectation; he was courtly by nature, and dignity was an element of his every-day demeanor. He had been in constant companionship with some of the greatest statesmen and orators of his time, but even his devotion to Charles James Fox had never beguiled him into any of Fox's careless, free-and-easy ways. He was sorely tried, as all con-

temporary accounts tell us, by the abrupt and overbearing manners of his son-in-law, Lord Durham, but he always contrived, in public at least, to bear Durham's eccentricities with unruffled temper and undisturbed dignity. Such a statesman must have had a hard time of it with King William of Yvetot; but let it be freely admitted that King William of Yvetot must have had a hard time of it with such a minister as Lord Grey. William would probably, if left to his own inclinations, have made up his mind to hold on to the Duke of Wellington, join with the Duke in opposing all schemes of reform, and face the music, if we may adopt a familiar modern phrase. But there was good sense enough in William's head, for all his odd ways and his unkingly humors, to teach him that he had better not begin his reign by setting himself against the public opinion of the great majority of his subjects, and therefore our good King of Yvetot consented to become, if not the head, at least the figure-head of a great historical movement.

CHAPTER LXXI.

REFORM.

THE King had no other course left open to him than to send for Lord Grey and invite him to form an Administration. Lord Grey was quite ready for the task, and must, for some time back, have had his mind constantly occupied with plans for such an arrangement. About some of the appointments there was no difficulty whatever. It was obvious that Lord Melbourne, Lord Althorp, and Lord John Russell would be invited to take office, but there was a certain difficulty about Brougham. The difficulty, however, was not about offering a place to Brougham; the only trouble was to find the place which would suit him, and his acceptance of which would also suit his leaders and his colleagues. Nothing could be more certain than the fact that Brougham must be invited to a place in the new Administration. He was a strong man with the country, and he now had a distinct following of his own.

Among the yet unenfranchised districts, especially in the North of England, Brougham probably counted for more, so far as the question of reform was concerned, than all the other reformers in Parliament put together. It would be idle to think of creating a Reform Ministry just then without Henry Brougham. The new Administration could not possibly get on without him. But then it was by no means certain that the new Administration could get on with him, and no one could understand this difficulty better than the stately and aristocratic Lord Grey. Grey had simply to choose between encountering an uncertainty or undertaking an impossibility, and of course he chose the former alternative. He had to invite Brougham to take office, but the question was what office it was

most advisable to ask him to take. Brougham was offered the position of Attorney-General, the acceptance of which allows a man to retain his seat in the House of Commons, while it puts him directly on the way to a high promotion to the judicial bench. Brougham flatly declined the offer, and seemed to be somewhat offended that it should have been made to him. Then Lord Grey thought of offering him the dignified position of Master of the Rolls, coupled with the exceptional arrangement that he was still to retain his seat in the House of Commons. Lord Grey was naturally very anxious to conciliate Brougham, and looked with much dread to the prospect of Brougham breaking off from the negotiations altogether and retaining his seat in the House as an independent critic of the Ministry. Nothing could well be more alarming to the head of the new Administration than the thought of Brougham thus sitting as an independent critic, prepared at any minute to come down with the force and fury of his eloquence on this or that section of the new Reform Bill, and to denounce it to the country as utterly inadequate to satisfy the just demands of the people. The King, however, suggested, with some good sense, that Brougham as a dissatisfied Master of the Rolls still sitting in the House of Commons might prove an inconvenient and dangerous colleague.

Lord Grey thought the matter over once more, and began to see another way of getting out of the difficulty. Why not give to Brougham the highest legal appointment in the service of the Crown, and thus promote him completely out of the House of Commons? Why not make him Lord Chancellor at once? This offer could not but satisfy even Brougham's well-known self-conceit, and it would transplant his eloquence to the quieter atmosphere of the House of Lords, where little harm could be done to the surrounding vegetation by its too luxuriant growth. In plain words, it might be taken for granted that the House of Lords would reject any reform measure, however moderate, when it was first introduced to the notice of the peers, and therefore no particular harm could come from Brougham's presence in the hereditary assembly. But

Brougham in the House of Commons might, at any time, be so far carried away by his own emotions, and his own eloquence, and his own masterful temperament as to bring his colleagues into many a difficulty, and force on them the unpleasant alternative of having to choose between going further than they had intended to go or failing to keep up with Brougham as the accredited and popular promoter of reform.

When Lord Grey next conferred with the King he was not a little surprised to hear from the sovereign's own lips a suggestion that Brougham might be offered the position of Lord Chancellor. Grey told the King that he had been almost afraid to start such a proposition, inasmuch as William had discouraged the idea of making Brougham Master of the Rolls; but the King with shrewd good sense directed Grey's attention to the fact, which had been already an operative force in Grey's own mind, that to make Brougham Master of the Rolls, and yet keep him in the House of Commons, might still leave him a very dangerous colleague, while by making him Lord Chancellor the King and his Prime Minister could get him practically out of the way altogether.

So it was agreed between the King and his Prime Minister that Lord Brougham should be made Lord Chancellor, and thus forfeit his right to sit in the House of Commons. If we speak with literal accuracy it is not quite correct to say that a man by becoming Lord Chancellor becomes necessarily, and at once, a member of the House of Lords. The Lord Chancellor of course presides over the sittings of the House of Lords, but he is not necessarily, from the first, a member of the hereditary assembly. He sits on the woolsack, which, though actually in the House of Lords, is not technically to be described as occupying such a position. If a Lord Chancellor who is actually a peer desires to take part in a debate he has to leave the woolsack and stand on some part of the floor which is technically within the Chamber. On more than one historic occasion some inconvenience has arisen from the fact that a newly created Lord Chancellor had not yet been

made a peer, and therefore was not entitled to take part in a debate, or even to speak for some ceremonial purpose within the Chamber on behalf of the House of Lords. Brougham as a matter of fact was not made a peer until a little time after he had become Lord Chancellor.

All this, however, is only mentioned here as a matter of curious and technical interest to the reader of Parliamentary history. Brougham was made a peer soon enough for all purposes, and in the mean time he was removed altogether from the House of Commons. Brougham did not accept his new position without some grumbling. Probably he had the idea that Lord Grey and others of his colleagues were glad to have him safely provided for out of the range of the representative assembly, where his eloquence might now and then become an inconvenient influence. He accepted the position, however, and became a member of the House of Lords. From that time his real influence over the country may be said to have come to an end. After he ceased to be Lord Chancellor he remained simply an eloquent, overbearing member of the House of Lords, often delighting the galleries and the public with his meteoric flashes of eloquence; but his power as a reformer was gone, and for the greater part of his remaining career, when one or two important questions to which he was pledged had been disposed of, he took little interest in any movement of reform.

Lord Althorp became Chancellor of the Exchequer. Lord Althorp, who was leader of the House of Commons as well as Chancellor of the Exchequer, was an influential person in those days, but is almost forgotten in our time. He was a model country gentleman, devoted to the duties and the delights of such a position; had a natural gift for farming and no natural inclination whatever for politics. Not merely did he make no pretensions to oratory, but, even for a country gentleman, he could not be regarded as a particularly good speaker. Yet he undoubtedly was a man of much weight in the Parliamentary life of his time. He was thoroughly straightforward and disinterested; he was absolutely truthful and honorable; his word was his bond,

and the House of Commons and the country in general could always feel sure that any advice given by Lord Althorp was guided by the light of his own judgment and his own conscience, and that he was never unduly swayed by fear, favor, or affection, whether towards sovereign or party. Lord Melbourne was Home Secretary.

If we glance down the list of this Reform Administration to-day we shall all probably be struck by the fact that the men who were regarded as juniors and something like beginners have come to occupy, in many cases, a higher position in political history than their elders and leaders. Lord John Russell, for instance, was not a member of Lord Grey's Cabinet; he only held the office of Paymaster of the Forces. From his first entrance into the House of Commons Lord John Russell had distinguished himself as a reformer. In 1819 he had brought forward a motion for a reform in the Parliamentary system, and he had renewed the motion in almost every succeeding year. He had been a steady supporter of the movement for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, which imposed an unjust and utterly irrational disqualification on Dissenters, and had been a zealous advocate of the measures for the emancipation of Roman Catholics. All his early life had been a training for statesmanship. He had been associated with scholars and thinkers, with poets and historians. He had gone through Spain while the war with Napoleon was still going on, and had been welcomed by the Duke of Wellington in his camp. He had visited Napoleon at Elba, and had talked over politics and war with the fallen Emperor. As Disraeli said of him many years later, he had sat at the feet of Fox and had measured swords with Canning. Lord Palmerston became for the first time Foreign Secretary in the Grey Administration. He had been a junior Lord of the Admiralty in a former Government, and he had more lately been Secretary at War; but at the time that he first became Foreign Secretary under Lord Grey few indeed could have anticipated that he was destined to become one of the most powerful English statesmen known to the century. Sir James Graham became First Lord of the Admiralty, and

some of us can still remember him as one of the foremost debaters in the House of Commons. Lord Durham, Grey's son-in-law, accepted what may almost be called the nominal office of Lord Privy Seal.

At that time Durham was regarded as a brilliant, eccentric sort of man, a perfervid reformer on whose perseverance or consistency no one could reckon for a moment—perhaps the comet of a season, but if so then surely a comet of a season only. We now recognize Durham as the man of statesmanlike foresight and genius who converted, at a great crisis, a Canada burning with internal hatred between race and sect, and the one common hatred of Imperial rule, into the Canada which we now know as one of the most peaceful, prosperous, and loyal parts of the British Empire. Mr. Stanley, afterwards Lord Derby, the famous "Rupert of debate," became Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. Grey appointed Lord Plunket Lord Chancellor for Ireland, and the name of Lord Plunket will always be remembered as that of one of the greatest Parliamentary orators known to modern times.

The new Ministry was, therefore, well prepared to carry on the battle of reform. Lord Grey had made up his mind that Lord John Russell, although not in the Cabinet, was the most fitting member of the Administration to conduct the Reform Bill through the House of Commons. As soon as Grey had completed his arrangements for the construction of a Ministry, Lord Durham put himself into communication with Lord John Russell. Durham told Lord John Russell that Lord Grey wished him to consult with Russell as to the formation of a small private committee whose task should be to create and put into shape some definite scheme as the foundation of the great constitutional change which the new Government had been called into power to establish. Lord John Russell of course accepted the suggestion, and after some consideration it was agreed by Lord Durham and himself that Sir James Graham and Lord Duncannon, then Commissioner of Woods and Forests, should be invited to join them, and make a committee of four for the purpose of devising a compre-

hensive and practicable measure of reform. Durham then asked Lord John to put on paper at once his own idea with regard to the outlines of such a plan, so that it might be taken into consideration by the committee at their earliest meeting.

Lord John Russell's book, "The English Government and Constitution," tells us all what was the central idea in his mind when he set himself to construct the groundwork of a Reform Bill. He tells us, alluding to the task assigned to him, "It was not my duty to cut the body of our old parent into pieces, and to throw it into a Medea's caldron, with the hope of reviving the vigor of youth." He thought it his duty not to turn aside "from the track of the Constitution into the maze of fancy or the wilderness of abstract rights." "It was desirable, in short, as it appeared to me, while sweeping away gross abuses, to avail ourselves, as far as possible, of the existing frame and body of our Constitution. Thus, if the due weight and influence of property could be maintained, by preserving the representation of a proportion of the small boroughs with an improved franchise, it was desirable rather to build on the old foundations than to indulge our fancy or our conceit in choosing a new site and erecting on new soil—perhaps on sand—an edifice entirely different from all that had hitherto existed."

No Reformer who understood the general character of the English people, and who had studied the development of political growth in England, could have gone more prudently and wisely about the work of bringing the existing Constitution into harmony with the altering conditions, and removing out of its way all difficulties that might interfere with its gradual and safe development in the future. But Russell was clearly of opinion, and in this he was entirely in accordance with Lord Grey, that nothing but a large and comprehensive measure would be of any real use, and that "to nibble at disfranchisement and cramp reform by pedantic adherence to existing rights would be to deceive expectation, to whet appetite, and to bring about that revolution which it was our object to

avert." Russell drew up a sketch of his proposed Reform Bill, which he submitted to Lord Durham, and on the draft of the measure thus submitted to him Lord Durham offered some suggestions and alterations of his own. Russell's speech was written on a single piece of letter-paper, and is reproduced with Lord Durham's notes in Russell's book, "The English Government and Constitution." The opening paragraph proposes that "the fifty boroughs having the smallest population according to the latest census should be disfranchised altogether." This proposal had Lord Durham's full approval, and he noted the fact that according to his calculation it would disfranchise all boroughs having a population of not more than 1400. The second paragraph proposed that fifty other boroughs of the least considerable population, above the line already drawn, should be allowed to send only one member each to the House of Commons. This proposal also had the approval of Lord Durham, and he notes it would apply to boroughs not having more than 3000 inhabitants each.

Then came a paragraph which proposed that all persons qualified to serve on juries should have the right of voting, and to this clause Lord Durham objected, regarding it probably as an embodiment of the principle of what were called in later days "fancy franchises." The fourth paragraph recommended that no person should be entitled to vote in cities or boroughs, except in the City of London, in Westminster, and in Southwark, unless he were a householder rated at ten pounds a year, and unless, moreover, he had paid his parochial taxes for three years, within three months after they became due, and had lived in the constituency for six months previous to the election at which he claimed to vote. The fifth clause proposed that the unrepresented parts of London should have among them four or six additional members, that eighteen large towns should have representation—and let the reader try to realize for himself what the supposed representation of the country could have been when at least eighteen large towns were, up to that time, wholly unrepresented—and that twenty counties should send two additional members

each to the House of Commons. Another paragraph limited the right of voting in the newly enfranchised towns to householders rated at ten pounds a year or persons qualified to serve on juries. Lord Durham approved of the rating qualification, but, consistently with his objection already mentioned, struck out the words which connected the right to vote with the right to serve on a jury. It is not necessary to go through the whole list of the proposals set out in the sketch drawn up by Lord John Russell. Those which we have already mentioned possess a peculiar historical interest and illustrate in the most precise and effective manner the whole nature of the system which, up to that time, had passed off as constitutional government.

It will be seen that, on the whole, Lord Durham was a more advanced reformer than even Lord John Russell. The entire scheme, as drawn out by Russell, consisted of ten paragraphs or clauses, and it was at once submitted to the consideration of the four men who formed the committee. There was much discussion as to the borough qualification for voters, and the committee finally agreed to recommend that it should be uniform, and thus get rid of what were called the freemen and the scot-and-lot voters, a class of persons endowed with antiquated and eccentric qualifications which possibly might have had some meaning in them and some justification under the conditions of a much earlier day, but which had since grown into a system enabling wealthier men to create in constituencies a body of thoroughly dependent or positively corrupt voters. The desire of the committee was to extend the voting privilege as far as possible consistently with due regard for the principle that the voters ought to be men of substance enough to insure their independence. This security they believed they could attain by establishing the ten-pound franchise. This seems, no doubt, to modern eyes a somewhat eccentric and haphazard line of demarkation; but it must be remembered that even until much later days the ten pounds rating principle in boroughs held its own, and was believed to be absolutely essential to the main-

tenance of an independent and upright body of voters, and to the securing of such a body against the danger of being "swamped," according to the once familiar word, by the votes of the dependent and the corrupt.

There were some slight differences of opinion between Lord John Russell and Lord Durham as to the extent to which the total or partial disfranchisement of the small boroughs ought to go, but the scheme, as finally shaped, had on the whole the thorough approval of the committee. One important proposal, brought forward, it was understood, by Lord Durham, was agreed to and formally adopted by the committee, but not without strong opposition on the part of Lord John Russell. This was the proposal for the introduction of the vote by ballot. When Lord Grey's Cabinet came to consider the draft scheme the proposal for the introduction of the vote by ballot was struck out altogether. The time, in fact, had not come for the adoption of so great a reform. Forty years had to pass before the mind of the English public could be brought to recognize the necessity for such a change. Statesmanship had still to learn how much the value of a popular suffrage was diminished or disparaged by the system which left the voter at the absolute mercy of some landlord or some patron who desired that the vote should be given for the candidate whom he favored. The ballot even then was demanded by the whole body of the Chartists. Orator Hunt, one of the most popular heroes of the Chartist agitation, had only just defeated Mr. Stanley at Preston. Daniel O'Connell was in favor of the ballot, because he saw that without its protection the Irish tenant farmer would have to vote for his landlord's candidate or would be turned out of his farm. But the general feeling among statesmen, as well as among the outer public, was that there was something un-English about the ballot system, and it was contended that the true Englishman ought to have the courage of his opinion and to vote as his conscience told him, without caring whom he offended. Edmund Burke in one of his speeches tells us that the system which is founded on the heroic virtues is sure to have its

superstructure in failure and disappointment, meaning thereby that every system is doomed to failure which assumes as its principle the idea that all men can at all times be up to the level of the heroic mood. Some of us can well remember the days when English statesmen still declared that the compulsion of education was un-English, and that it ought to be left to the free choice of the English parent whether he would have his children taught or leave them untaught.

Lord Grey's Cabinet would have nothing to do with the ballot. With this exception the draft scheme as submitted by Lord John Russell was accepted by Lord Grey and his colleagues. Then it was laid before the King, and the King, according to Lord John Russell, gave it his ready and cheerful sanction. There were indeed some observers at the time who believed that the King had cheerfully sanctioned the whole scheme of reform as proposed, because he still confidently believed that nothing but the wreck of the Ministry was to come of it. However that may have been, it is certain that the King did give his full sanction to the measure, and the Government prepared to introduce the first Reform Bill.

It was arranged that the conduct of the Bill in the House of Commons should be placed in the hands of Lord John Russell. This arrangement created, when the Bill was actually brought forward, a good deal of adverse criticism in the House and in the country. Some prominent members of the Opposition in the House of Commons persuaded themselves, and tried to persuade their listeners, that Lord Grey's Cabinet, by adopting such an arrangement, showed that there was no sincerity in the professed desire for reform. If the members of the Cabinet, it was argued, are such believers in the virtue of reform, why do they not select one of their own body to introduce the measure? Lord John Russell was only Paymaster of the Forces, and had not a seat in the Cabinet, and if he was taken out of his place and put into the most prominent position it could only be because no member of the Cabinet could be found who was willing to undertake the task.

The answer was very clear, even at the time, and it is obvious indeed to the generations that had an opportunity of knowing how eminently Lord John Russell was qualified for the work which had been entrusted to his hands. He was a member of one of the greatest aristocratic families in the land, and one of the practical dangers threatening the Reform Bill was the alarm that might spread among the wealthier classes at the thought of a wild democratic movement upsetting the whole principle of aristocratic predominance in the English constitutional system. Still more important was the fact that Lord John Russell, who had distinguished himself already as the most devoted promoter of constitutional reform, was a man peculiarly qualified by intellect and by his skill in exposition to pilot such a measure through the House of Commons.

Lord John Russell had not yet won reputation as a great Parliamentary orator; nor did he, during the whole of his long career, succeed in acquiring such a fame. But he was a master of the art which consists in making a perfectly clear statement of the most complicated case, and in defending his measure point by point with never-failing readiness and skill throughout the most perplexing series of debates. It was pointed out also, at the time, that if Lord John Russell was selected to introduce the Reform Bill, although he was only Paymaster of the Forces and had not a seat in the Cabinet, thus too had Edmund Burke been selected to introduce the East India Bill, although he, like Lord John Russell, was only Paymaster of the Forces and had not a seat in the Cabinet. Indeed, to us, who now look back on the events from a long distance of time, the impression would rather be that Lord Grey had little or no choice in the matter. He was not himself a member of the House of Commons, and therefore could not introduce the Bill there. Brougham had ceased to be a member of the House of Commons, and was therefore out of the question. Lord Althorp, who had not yet succeeded to the peerage, and had a seat in the representative chamber, was, as we have already said, the poorest of

speakers, and utterly unsuited for the difficult task of steering so important a measure through the troublous sea of Parliamentary debate. Lord Grey, of course, was thoroughly well acquainted with Russell's great abilities and his peculiar fitness for the task assigned to him, and could, under no circumstances, have made a better choice. But our only possible difficulty now would be to say what other choice, under the existing conditions, he could possibly have made.

Tuesday, March 1, 1831, was the day fixed for the introduction of the Reform Bill in the House of Commons. In the mean time, as we learn from all who can be considered authorities on the subject, the nature and the plan of the proposed reforms were kept a profound secret, not only from the public at large, but even from members of the House of Commons itself, with the exception of those who belonged to the Administration. Ministerial secrets, it is only fair to say, are generally well kept in England, but instances have undoubtedly occurred in which the nature of some approaching measure, which ought to have been held in the profoundest secrecy until the time came for its official revelation, has leaked out and become fully known to the public in advance. There is, of course, great difficulty in preventing some inkling of the truth getting prematurely out. Cabinet Ministers generally have wives, and there are stories of such wives having caught stray words from their husbands which put them on a track of discovery, and not having the grace to keep strictly to themselves the discovery when made. No such mischance, however, appears to have attended the preparation of the Reform Bill. It is said that there must have been more than thirty persons who had official knowledge of the Ministerial plans, and yet it does not appear that any definite idea as to their nature was obtained by the public.

It may perhaps be asked whether there was any solid reason for attaching so much importance to the keeping of a secret which on a certain fixed and near-approaching day must, as a matter of fact, be a secret no more. Of course the imperative necessity of secrecy would be obvious

in all cases where some policy was in preparation which might directly affect the interests of foreign States. In such a case it is clear that it might be of essential importance to a Government not to let its plans become known to the world before it had put itself into a condition to maintain its policy. In measures that had to do with commercial and financial interests it might often be of paramount importance that no false alarm or false expectations of any kind should be allowed to disturb the business of the country before the fitting time came for a full declaration. But in the case of such a measure as the Reform Bill it may be asked if any great advantage was to be gained by keeping the nature of the measure a complete secret until the hour came for its full and official explanation. With regard to this Reform Bill there were many good reasons for maintaining the profoundest possible secrecy. If any premature reports got out at all they would be sure to be imperfect reports, indiscreet or haphazard revelations of this or that particular part of the Bill, utterly wanting in balance, symmetry, and comprehensiveness. The whole thing was new to the country, and there would have been much danger in fixing public attention upon some one part of the proposed reform until the public could be in a position to judge the scheme as a complete measure.

Lord Grey's Government had to deal with two classes of men who were naturally and almost relentlessly opposed to each other—the more clamorous reformers and the enemies of all reform. It was of immense importance that the latter class should, if possible, be prevailed upon to see—at least the more intelligent and reasonable among them—that the Government had not gone so far in the direction of reform as to make it seem a threatened revolution. It was, on the other hand, of immense importance to prevail upon the former class to see that the Government had not so stunted and dwarfed its proposed reform as to render it incapable of anything like a political and constitutional revolution. Any sudden explosion of feeling on either side brought about by some premature

and imperfect revelation might have caused the most serious trouble in the country.

Moreover, none of the ministers could possibly profess to be quite certain as to the genuine wishes and purposes of his Majesty King William the Fourth with regard to the Reform Bill. The King was not always in the same mood on the same subject for any two days in succession, or indeed for any two hours of the same day. If the opponents of all reform were to get a knowledge of the clauses in the Bill least favorable to their own ideas as to their interests, and were to make a commotion among the owners of the soil, the immediate effect might be to discourage the King altogether, to fill his mind with a strong desire for escape from the uncongenial part of a reformer and an overmastering anxiety to get rid of his reforming Ministry. If, on the other hand, the Peterloo men, the Chartists generally, and the populations of the northern towns were to get into their minds through some imperfect revelation that the Ministerial Bill was not intended to do half so much for them as they were demanding, and if in consequence there were to be a stormy agitation throughout the country, then it was quite possible that the King might take alarm and tell his ministers that it was hopeless to think of conciliating such agitators, and that the safety of the State, and especially of the monarchy, could only be provided for by postponing reform until some more favorable opportunity. For all these reasons, and many others, the leaders of the Government had their hearts set on keeping well their secret until the right hour should come for its official disclosure, and it is a fact of some historical interest, even to readers of the present day, that the secret was faithfully kept.

The 1st of March, 1831, was a day of intense excitement and even tumult in and around the House of Commons. We are told that never before in that generation had there been so great a crowd of persons struggling for seats in the galleries of the House of Commons. It is recorded, as an illustration of this intense eagerness on the part of the public, that every available seat in the House

was occupied for hours before the business of the day began. This, however, is not a statement that could fill with surprise any reader of the present day. We have been accustomed lately to read of occasions when not merely crowds of strangers anxious to obtain seats, but crowds of members positively entitled to get seats, have had to take their stand at the outer gates of the House of Commons hours before daybreak on the morning of the day when some great measure was to be introduced, that they might get a reasonable chance of a place, in order to hear a speech which could not possibly begin before four o'clock in the afternoon. Certainly the House of Commons did not then consist of nearly as many members as it has at present, and the reformed House of Commons has not even yet been so reformed as to impress it with the idea that there ought to be so many seats for so many members. However that may be, it is quite certain that there was intense interest manifested by the public on the day when the Reform Bill was to be introduced; that immense crowds of people made for the Parliament buildings, and that the approaches to the House of Commons were besieged by an excited and tumultuous crowd. There was, in fact, such a rush made to secure the seats in the galleries available for the public, so much noisy struggling and quarrelling for seats, that the Speaker was at last compelled to intervene and to declare that if quiet was not at once restored it would be his duty to have the House cleared of all strangers. Order was thus restored after a time, and at last the moment arrived for Lord John Russell to introduce the Reform Bill. That was indeed a moment of genuine historical interest.

The descriptions given at the time by listeners tell us that Russell began his speech in tones which were unusually quiet, low, and reserved even for him. It may be said at once that throughout his whole career in Parliament Russell's manner had been peculiarly quiet and repressed, and that his eloquence seldom had any fervor in it. That he was a man of deep feeling and warm emotions is certain, but both in public and private life there

was a coldness about him which often led strangers into the quite erroneous belief that he kept apart from the crowd because he was filled with a sense of his aristocratic position and wished to hold himself aloof from contact with ordinary mortals. As a Parliamentary debater he was singularly clear, concise, and unaffected. He was a great master of phrases, and some odd epigrammatic sentences of his still live in our common speech, and are quoted almost every day by persons who have not the least idea as to the source from which they come. His speech on the introduction of the Reform Bill was even for him peculiarly calm, deliberate, and restrained. It contained some passages which will always live in our history, and will illustrate to the reader, more effectively than a mass of statistics or political tracts might do, the nature and proportions of the absurd anomalies which Russell was endeavoring to abolish. It may be well to mention the fact that it was this speech which, for the first time, introduced and adopted the word "Reformer" as the title of the genuine Whig, and applied the term "Conservative," in no unfriendly sense, to the Tory party.

Lord John Russell opened his speech by a vindication of the representative principle as the first condition of the English constitutional system. He made it clear that in the early days of our Parliaments this principle had been distinctly acknowledged, and, to a certain extent, had been carried out in practice. Then he showed how the principle had come to be less and less recognized in the arrangement of our constituencies and the allotment of representatives, until at last there had ceased to be any manner of proportion between representatives and population or any practical acknowledgment of the main purpose for which representatives were to be selected. Everything had tended, in the mean time, to make the owners of the soil also the owners and masters of the representation. Lord John Russell employed a series of illustrations, at once simple and striking, to impress upon his audience a due understanding of the extraordinary manner in which the whole principle of representation had been diverted

from its original purpose. He assumed the case of some inquiring and intelligent foreigner, a stranger to our institutions but anxious to learn all about them, who had come to England for the purpose of obtaining information on the spot. The stranger has the nature and the purpose of our Parliamentary system explained to him, and he is assured that it rests on the representative principle. He is told that the House of Commons is assembled for the purpose of enabling the sovereign to collect the best advice that can be given to him as to the condition, the wants, and the wishes of his subjects.

The House of Commons is to be in that sense representative; it is to be the interpreter to the King of all that his people wish him to know. Then the stranger is naturally anxious to learn how the constituencies are formed, by whose selection the representatives are sent to Parliament, in order to render to the King a faithful message from his people. The stranger is taken to a grassy mound, let us say, in the midst of an expanse of silent, unpeopled fields, and he is told that that grassy mound sends two members to the House of Commons. He is shown a stone wall with three niches in it, and he is informed that those three niches are privileged to contribute two members to the representative assembly. Lord John Russell described with force and masterly humor a variety of such sights which were pointed out to the stranger, each description being an accurate picture of some place which long since had lost all population, but still continued to have the privilege of sending representatives to Parliament. Then Lord John Russell changed his form of illustration. He took his stranger to some of the great manufacturing and commercial cities and towns of England, and described the admiration and the wonder with which the intelligent foreigner regarded these living evidences of the growth and the greatness of the nation. Here then, no doubt, the stranger begins at last to think that he can really understand the practical value of the representative principle. Thus far he has only been bewildered by what he has seen and heard of the empty stretches of land which are en-

dowed with a right to have representatives in the House of Commons, but now he begins to acknowledge to himself that a people with such great manufacturing communities can send up to London representatives enough from their own centres to constitute a Parliament capable of advising with any monarch. Then, to his utter amazement, the distracted foreigner learns that these great cities and towns have no right whatever to representation in the House of Commons, and have nothing whatever to do with the election of members.

The imaginary foreigner who knew nothing about the principle of the workings of our Constitution before his arrival in the country might well have been amazed and confounded, and might have fancied, if he had been a reader of English literature, that he had lost his way somehow, and instead of arriving in England had stumbled into the State of Laputa. He might well indeed be excused for such bewilderment, seeing that an English student of the present day finds it hard to realize in his mind the possibility and the reality of the condition of things which existed in this country within the lifetime of men still living. Lord John Russell then went on to describe the manner in which the Government proposed to deal with the existing defects of the whole Parliamentary system. He laid it down as the main principle of the reforms he was prepared to introduce that a free citizen should not be compelled to pay taxes in the imposition and levying of which he was allowed to have no voice. The vast majority of free citizens could in any case only express their opinions as to this or that financial impost through their representatives in the House of Commons. This principle had of late been allowed to fail so grossly and so widely in its application that the House of Commons had almost entirely ceased to represent the will of the people.

Lord John Russell explained that the chief evils with which the Government had to deal were three in number. The first was the nomination of members of Parliament by individual patrons. The second was the nomination of members by close corporations. The third was the enor-

mous expense of elections, which was principally caused by the open bribery and corruption which had almost become a recognized accompaniment of every contest. He proposed to deal with the first evil by abolishing altogether the representation of the nominal constituencies, the constituencies that had no resident inhabitant, the boroughs which at some distant time had had houses and inmates, but of which now only the faintest traces were visible to the eye of the traveller—like, for instance, the extinct communities of whose existence some faint memorial evidence might be traced on Salisbury Plain. The Census last taken, that of 1821, the Government had resolved to accept as a basis of operations, and Lord John Russell proposed that every borough which, at that date, had less than 2000 inhabitants should cease any longer to send a member to the House of Commons. All boroughs that had not more than 4000 inhabitants should send in future only one member each to Parliament. The principle of nomination by individuals or by corporations was to come to an end. The "fancy franchises" were to be got rid of altogether. In the boroughs every householder paying rates on houses of the yearly value of ten pounds and upwards was entitled to have a vote.

The Government, however, proposed to deal mercifully, so far as possible, with the existing interests of voters, although the process of extinction was summary and complete with regard to the so-called rights of patrons and of corporations. For instance, resident voters, under the old qualifications, were to be allowed to retain their right during their lives, but with the lapse of each life the qualification expired and the owner of such a vote could have no successor. When dealing with the counties Lord John Russell announced that copyholders to the value of ten pounds a year and leaseholders for not less than twenty-one years at an annual rent of fifty pounds and upwards were to have the franchise. The abolition of the small boroughs and the uninhabited constituencies would reduce the number of members in the House of Commons by 168, and Lord John Russell explained that the Government did not pro-

pose to fill up all these vacancies, being of opinion that the House was already rather overflowing in its numbers and had a good deal too many members for the proper discharge of its business.

Some of the vacant seats were, however, to be assigned to the cities and towns which were then actually unrepresented in the House of Commons. Seven of these towns were to have two representatives each, and twenty smaller but still goodly towns were to have one representative each. Even at this day it may still come as a matter of surprise to some readers to learn that the seven towns which in 1831 were wholly unrepresented, and to which the Bill proposed to give two members each, were Manchester, which was to include Salford; Birmingham, Leeds, Greenwich, Wolverhampton, Sheffield, and Sunderland. The Government proposed to give eight additional members to the metropolis itself—that is to say, two members each to the Tower Hamlets, Holborn, Finsbury, and Lambeth. The three Ridings of Yorkshire were to have two members each, and twenty-six counties already represented, and in each of which there were more than 150,000 inhabitants, were each to have two additional members. It is not necessary to go more fully into the details of the scheme which Lord John Russell expounded elaborately to the House of Commons.

In Ireland and in Scotland there were some slight differences as to the scale of the qualification from those that were proposed for England; but in the three countries the principle was the same, and the right to vote was associated with a certain occupation of land or payment of household rating, and new constituencies were created where towns, unrepresented before, had grown up into recognized importance. By the changes that the Bill proposed to make no less than half a million of new voters were to be created throughout Great Britain and Ireland. For the purpose of diminishing the enormous expense of elections it was proposed that the poll should be taken at the same time in separate districts, so that no voter should have to travel more than fifteen miles in order to record his vote, and

that the time over which an election contest could be spread should be greatly reduced, and reduced in proportion to the size of the constituency. It is as well to say at once that that part of the Reform Bill which aimed at the due reduction of election expenses to their legitimate and necessary proportions proved an utter failure. No reduction in the amount of what may be called working expenses could have diminished, to any satisfactory degree, the evil from which the country was suffering at that time, and from which it continued to suffer for more than another generation. Bribery and corruption were the evils which had to be dealt with, and the Reform Bill of 1831 left these evils as it had found them. The Bill, however, did, in its other provisions, do much to establish a genuine principle of Parliamentary representation.

To begin with, it proclaimed the principle of representation as the legal basis of the whole Parliamentary system. It abolished the nomination of members, whether by individual persons or by corporations. It laid down as law that representation must bear some proportion to the numbers represented. It made actual, or at least occasional, residence a qualification for a voter. These were the main principles of the measure. The attention of readers will presently be drawn to the manner in which the Bill failed to answer some of the demands made upon the Government by the spreading intelligence of the country, and left these demands to be more adequately answered by the statesmen of a later generation. Enough to say that with all its defects the Bill, as Lord John Russell explained it, was, for its time, a bold and broad measure of reform, and that it laid down the lines along which, as far as human foresight can discern, the movement of progress in England's political history will make its way.

CHAPTER LXXII.

THE GREAT DEBATE.

THE debate which followed Lord John Russell's motion for leave to bring in the Bill contained, as well might be expected, some very remarkable speeches. Three of these deserve the special attention of the student of history. The first illustrated the views of the extreme Tory of that day, and is indeed a political curiosity which ought never to be consigned to utter oblivion. This speech was made by Sir Robert Harry Inglis, who represented the University of Oxford. Sir Robert Inglis was a living embodiment of the spirit of old-world Toryism as it had come down to his day, Toryism which had in it little or nothing of the picturesque, half poetic sentiment belonging to the earlier wearers of the rebel rose, the flower symbolic of the Stuart dynasty. Sir Robert Inglis was a man of education, of intelligence, and of high principle. His sincerity was unquestioned, and his opinion would probably be well worth having on any question which was not concerned with the antagonism between Whig and Tory. Sir Robert argued boldly in his speech that the principle of representation had never been recognized by the Constitution as the Parliamentary system of England. He insisted that the sovereign had a perfect right to choose any representative he pleased from any constituency which it suited him to create. The King could delegate to any nobleman or gentleman his right of nominating a representative. Sir Robert scouted the idea that a large, prosperous, and populous town had any better claim to be represented in the House of Commons than the smallest village in the country. It was all a matter for the sovereign, and if the sovereign thought fit he had as good a right to invite any one he

pleased to represent an unpeopled plain as to represent Manchester, Leeds, or Sheffield. He denounced Russell's proposal to disfranchise the small nomination boroughs, and he used an argument which was employed in the same debate and by much wiser men than he in defence of the pocket boroughs and the whole system of nomination. Some of the most brilliant, gifted members of the House of Commons, he contended, had been sent into that House by the patrons and owners of such boroughs, and otherwise never could have got into Parliament at all, for they could not have borne the enormous expense of a county contest.

We have heard that argument over and over again in days much more recent. It would, of course, have been hard to dispose of it completely if it could be shown that there was no possible way by which the expenses of elections could be reduced to a reasonable amount; if it could be shown that there was any human system so bad as to have no compensating advantages whatever; and finally if it could be shown that with the spread of education and the growth of popular intelligence a man of great and commanding ability without money would not have a much better chance of election at the hands of a large constituency than by the mere favor of some discerning patron. Sir Robert Inglis also used an argument which is even still not unfamiliar in political debate, whether inside or outside Parliament. He contended not merely that the English population had no real grievances to complain of, but that none among the English population would have fancied that they were suffering from grievances if it had not been for the evil advice and turbulent agitation of mob orators. To these wicked persons, the mob orators, Sir Robert ascribed all the disturbances which were setting the country in commotion. If only these mob orators could be kept from spouting everything would go well and no subject of the sovereign would ever get it into his head that he was suffering from the slightest grievance.

This is an argument which had just been used with regard to Catholic Emancipation; which was afterwards to

be used with regard to free-trade and the introduction of the ballot and household suffrage; and which will probably be used again and again so long as any sort of reform is demanded. Of course it need hardly be said that when Sir Robert Inglis referred to mob orators he used the phrase as a term of contempt applying to all speakers who advocated principles which were not the principles represented by the Tory aristocracy. A Tory landlord spouting any kind of nonsense to the most ignorant crowd would not have been, according to this definition, a mob orator; he would have been a high-bred Englishman, instructing his humbler brethren as to the way they ought to go. Sir Robert also indulged in the most gloomy prophecies about the evils which must come upon England as the direct result of the Reform Bill if that Bill were to be passed into law. The influence of rank and property would suddenly and completely cease to prevail; education would lose its power to teach and to guide; the House of Commons would no longer be the place for men of rank, culture, and statesmanship, but would be occupied only by mob orators. Art after art would go out and all would be night, if we may adopt the famous line of Pope's which Sir Robert somehow failed to introduce.

The second speech in the debate to which we may refer was that of Sir Robert Peel. It was a necessity of Peel's position just then, and of the stage of political development which his mind had reached, that he should oppose the Reform Bill. But in the work of opposition he had to undertake a task far more difficult to him in the artistic sense than the task which the destinies had appointed for Sir Robert Inglis to attempt. Inglis, although a man of ability and education, as collegiate education then went, was so thorough a Tory of the old school that the most extravagant arguments he used came as naturally and clearly to his mind as if they had been dictated to him by inspiration. But a man of Peel's high order of intellect, a man who had been gifted by nature with the mind of a statesman, must sometimes have found it hard indeed to convince himself that some of the arguments he used against reform

were arguments which the history of the future would be likely to maintain. Peel's genius, however, was not one which readily adopted conclusions, especially when these conclusions involved a change in the seeming order of things. We have seen already that he was quite capable of taking a bold decision and accepting its responsibilities when the movement of events seemed to satisfy him that a choice one way or the other could no longer be postponed.

The whole story of his subsequent career bears evidence of the same effect. His genius guided him rightly when the fateful moment arrived at which a decision had to be made, but when left to himself his inclinations always were to let things go on in their old way. He had not yet seen any necessity for a complete system of Parliamentary reform, nor was he likely, in any case, to have approved of some of the proposals contained in the Bill brought in by Lord John Russell. The speech he delivered appears, by all the accounts which reach us, to have been a genuine piece of Parliamentary eloquence. Peel did not, as may well be imagined, commit himself to some of the extravagances which were poured forth in absolute good faith by Sir Robert Inglis. But the very nature of his task compelled him sometimes to have recourse to arguments which, although put forward with more discretion and more dexterity than Inglis had shown, seemed nevertheless to belong to the same order of political reasoning.

It is not, perhaps, surprising that Peel should have found much to say for the existence of the small nomination boroughs, seeing that the same arguments were made use of a whole generation afterwards by no less a person than Mr. Gladstone. These arguments, we need hardly say, were founded on the familiar assumption that a Burke or a Sheridan, a Canning or a Plunket, would have no chance whatever of getting into the House of Commons if some appreciative patron did not generously put a borough at his disposal. In our own days we have seen, again and again, that a man of high political character and commanding eloquence, but having no money or other such influence to back him, would have a far better chance at

the hands of a great popular constituency than he would be likely to have in some small borough, where local interests might easily be brought to conspire against him. But at the time when Peel was making his speech against the Reform project the patronage system still prevailed in politics, if no longer in letters, and the unendowed child of genius would have little chance indeed if he were to try to get into Parliament on his own mere merits. On the whole, it must be owned that Sir Robert Peel made as good a case against the Bill as could have been made from the Conservative point of view, and it may be added that an equally ingenious case might have been made out by a man of his capacity against any change whatever in any system.

The third speech to which we think it necessary to refer was that delivered by the Irish orator and agitator, Daniel O'Connell. O'Connell promised the Bill all the support in his power, but he took care to explain that he supported it only because he believed it was the best Bill he could obtain from any Government at that moment. He described clearly and impressively the faults which he found with Lord John Russell's measure; and it has to be noticed that the objections which he raised were absolutely confirmed by our subsequent political history. He found fault with the Bill because it did not go nearly as far as such a measure ought to go in the direction of manhood suffrage, or, at all events, of household suffrage. He contended that no Reform Bill could really fulfil the best purposes for which it was designed without the adoption of the ballot system in the voting at popular elections. He advocated shorter Parliaments and much more comprehensive and strenuous legislation for the prevention of bribery and corruption. In short, O'Connell made a speech which might have been spoken with perfect appropriateness by an English Radical of the highest political order at any time during some succeeding generations. O'Connell's opinions seem to have been at that time, save on one political question alone—the question of Repeal of the Union—exactly in accord with those of the Radical party down to the days of Cobden and Bright.

It may be mentioned, as a matter of some historical interest, that, vindicating the true theory of popular representation, he complained that successive English Governments had abandoned the constitutional position taken up by the glorious Revolution of 1688. Readers of the present day may be inclined to think, not without good reason for the thought, that statesmanship in the days of Lord Grey's first Reform Bill, and for many years after, might have had less trouble with Ireland if it had taken better account of the opinions and the influence of O'Connell.

The debate on the motion for leave to bring in the Bill lasted several days. In accordance, however, with the usual practice of the House of Commons, no division was taken and the Bill was read a first time. In the House of Commons it is not usual to have a long debate on the motion for leave to bring in a Bill, which amounts in substance to a motion that the Bill be read for the first time. When, however, a measure of great importance is introduced there is sometimes a lengthened and very often a discursive debate or conversation on the motion; but it is rarely so long and so earnest a discussion as that which took place when Lord John Russell brought in the Reform Bill. One result of the length of the debate which preceded the first reading was that when the motion for the second reading came on the leading members of the Opposition were found to have expressed fully their opinions already, and the discussion seemed little better than the retelling of an old story.

When the motion for the second reading came to be put to the vote it was found that the Opposition had got together a very full gathering of their numbers, and the second reading was only carried by a majority of one. The hearts of many of the reformers sank within them for the moment, and the hopes of the Tories were revived in an equal degree. Even already it seemed clear to all of Lord Grey's colleagues that a measure carried on its second reading by such a bare majority had not the slightest chance of forcing its way through the House of Lords, even if it should be fortunate enough to pass without serious

damage through the House of Commons. Lord Grey and his colleagues were already beginning to think that nothing worth accomplishing was likely to be achieved until a general election should have greatly strengthened the Reform party in Parliament. The movement for reform had of late been growing steadily in most parts of the country. Some of the more recent elections had shown that the reform spirit was obtaining the mastery in constituencies from which nothing of the kind had been expected a short time before, and it seemed to most of the Whig leaders that the existing Parliament was the last bulwark against the progress of reform. When the time came for the motion to enable the Bill to get into committee—that is, to be discussed point by point in all its clauses by the House, with full liberty to every member to speak as many times as he pleased—General Gascoigne, one of the representatives of Liverpool, proposed an amendment to the effect that it was not expedient, at such a time, to reduce the numbers of knights, citizens, and burgesses constituting the House of Commons, and this amendment was carried by a majority of eight. Now the carrying of this amendment could not possibly have been considered as the destruction of any vital part of the Bill.

Lord John Russell had argued for the reduction of the numbers in the House as a matter of convenience and expediency; but he had not given it to be understood that the Government felt itself pledged to that particular proposition, and had made up his mind not to accept any modification in that part of the plan. The authors of the Reform Bill, however, read very wisely in the success of General Gascoigne's amendment the lesson that in the existing Parliament the Tories would be able to take the conduct of the measure out of the hands of the Government during its progress through committee, and to mar and mutilate it, so as to render it entirely unsuited to its original purposes. Therefore Lord Grey and the other members of his Cabinet made up their minds that the best course they could take would be to accept the vote of the House of Commons as a distinct defeat, and to make an

appeal to the decision of the constituencies by an instant dissolution of Parliament.

One important question had yet to be settled. Would the King give his assent to the dissolution? No one could have supposed that the King was really at heart a reformer, and the general conviction was that if William cared anything at all about the matter his personal inclination would be in favor of good old Toryism, or that, at the very least, his inclination would be for allowing things to go on in the old way. At that time the principle had not yet been set up as a part of our constitutional system that the sovereign was bound to submit his own will and pleasure to the advice of his ministers. It would have been quite in accordance with recognized precedents since the House of Hanover came to the throne if the King were to proclaim his determination to act upon his own judgment and let his ministers either put up with his decision or resign their offices.

For some time, indeed, it appeared as if the King was likely to assert his prerogative, according to the old fashion. The disagreeable and almost hazardous task of endeavoring to persuade the King into compliance with the desire of his Ministry was entrusted to Lord Brougham, who was supposed, as Lord Chancellor, to be keeper of the sovereign's conscience. Brougham was not a man who could be described as gifted with the bland powers of persuasion, but at all events he did not want courage for the task he had to undertake. William appears at first to have refused flatly his consent to the wishes of the Ministry, to have blustered a good deal in his usual unkingly, not to say ungainly, fashion, and to have replied to Brougham's intimation that the ministers might have to resign, with words to the effect that ministers, if they liked, might resign and be—ministers no more. The King, however, was at last prevailed upon to give his assent, but then a fresh trouble arose when he found that Lord Grey and Lord Brougham, presuming on his ultimate compliance, had already taken steps to make preparations for the ceremonials preceding dissolution. As the Min-

istry thought it necessary that there should be no delay whatever in the steps required to dissolve Parliament, a message had been sent in order that the Life Guards should be ready, according to the usual custom when the King went to Westminster for such a purpose. William found in this act on the part of the Ministry a new reason for an outburst of wrath. He stormed at Brougham; he declared that it was an act of high-treason to call out the Life Guards without the express authority of the King, and he raged in a manner which seemed to imply that only the mercy of the sovereign could save Grey and Brougham from the axe on Tower Hill.

Perhaps it was fortunate on the whole for the peaceful settlement of the controversy that the King should have found this new and unexpected stimulant to his anger; for when his wrath had completely exploded over it, and when Brougham had been able to explain, again and again, that no act of high-treason had been contemplated or committed, the royal fury had spent itself; the King's good-humor had returned; and in the reaction William had forgotten most of his objections to the original proposal. It was arranged, then, that the dissolution should take place at once. As a matter of fact, Sir Robert Peel, in the House of Commons, was actually declaiming, in his finest manner, and with a voice that Disraeli afterwards described as the best ever heard in the House, excepting indeed "the thrilling tones of O'Connell," against the whole scheme of reform, when the Usher of the Black Rod was heard knocking at the doors of the Chamber to summon its members to attend at the bar of the House of Lords, in order to receive the commands of his Majesty the King. The commands of his Majesty the King were in fact the announcement that Parliament was dissolved, and that an appeal to the country for the election of a new Parliament was to take place at once.

The news was received by Reformers all over the country with the most exuberant demonstrations of enthusiasm. In London most of the houses throughout the principal streets were illuminated, and many windows which showed

no lights were instantly broken by the exulting crowds that swarmed everywhere. The Duke of Wellington received marked tokens of the unpopularity which his uncompromising declaration against all manner of reform had brought upon him. Some of the windows at Apsley House, his town residence—the windows that looked into the Park—were broken by an impassioned mob, and for years afterwards these windows were always kept shuttered, as a sign—so at least the popular faith assumed it to be—that the Duke could not forgive or forget this evidence of public ingratitude to the conqueror of Waterloo. The King, on the other hand, had grown suddenly into immense popularity. The favorite title given to him at the time of his accession was that of the "Sailor King." Now he was hailed everywhere in the streets as the "Patriot King." Wherever his carriage made its public appearance it was sure to be followed by an admiring and acclaiming crowd. The elections came on at once, and it has to be noted that the amount of money spent on both sides was something astonishing even for those days of reckless expenditure in political contests. Neither side could make any boast of political purity, and indeed neither side seemed to have the slightest inclination to set up such a claim. The only rivalry was in the spending of money in unrestricted and shameless bribery and corruption. The more modern sense of revolt against the whole principle of bribery was little thought of in those days. There were men, indeed, on both sides of the political field who would never have stooped to offer a bribe if left to the impulses of their own honor and their own conscience. But the ordinary man of the world, and more especially of the political world, felt that if he himself did not give the bribe his rival would be certain to give it, and that nobody at his club or in society would think any the worse of him because it was understood that he had bought himself into the House of Commons. When the elections were over the prevalent opinion as to their result was almost everywhere that the numbers of the Reform party in the House of Commons would be much greater than it had been in the

House so lately dissolved. When the new Parliament was opened, Lord John Russell and Mr. Stanley appeared as members of the Cabinet. The new Parliament was opened by King William on June 21. If William really enjoyed the consciousness of popularity, as there is every reason to believe he did, he must have felt a very proud and popular sovereign that day. His carriage as he drove to the entrance of the House of Lords was surrounded and followed by an immense crowd, which cheered itself hoarse in its demonstrations of loyalty. On June 24 Lord John Russell introduced his second Reform Bill. It is not necessary to go through the details of the new measure. The second Reform Bill was in substance very much the same as its predecessor had been, but of course its principle was debated on the motion of the second reading with as much heat, although not at such great length, as in the case of the first Reform Bill a few weeks before. Nothing new came out in this second argument, and the debate on the second reading, which began on July 4, occupied only three nights, a fact which made some members of the Opposition think themselves entitled to the compliments of the country. The Parliamentary opponents of the Reform Bill were, however, soon to make it evident that they had more practical and more perplexing ways of delaying its progress through the House of Commons than by the delivery of long orations on the elementary principle of reform. The second reading of the Bill was carried by 367 votes in its favor and 231 votes against it—that is to say, by a majority of 136 for the Bill. Therefore everybody saw that, as far as the House of Commons in the new Parliament was concerned, there was a large majority in support of the measure brought forward by the Government.

It was morning, and not very early morning, when the House divided, and the Attorney-General had not much time to spare for rest before setting off for one of the law courts to conduct a prosecution which the Government had thought it well to institute against a man who held a most prominent position in England at that time, and whose name, it is safe to say, will be remembered as long as good

English prose is studied. This man was William Cobbett, and he had just aroused the anger of the Government by a published article in which he vindicated the conduct of those who had set fire to hayricks and destroyed farm buildings in various parts of the country. William Cobbett had begun life as the son of a small farmer, who was himself the son of a day laborer. He had lived a strange and varied life. In his boyish days he had run away from a little farm in Surrey and had flung himself upon the world of London. He had found employment, for a while, in the humblest kind of drudgery as a junior copying clerk in an attorney's office, and then he had enlisted in a regiment of foot. He was quartered for a year at Chatham, and he devoted all his leisure moments to reading, for which he had a passion which lasted him all his lifetime. He is said to have exhausted the whole contents of a lending library in the neighborhood, for he preferred reading anything to reading nothing. He was especially fond of historical and scientific studies, but he had a love for literature of a less severe kind also, and he studied with intense eagerness the works of Swift, on whose style he seems to have moulded his own with much success and without any servile imitation. Then he was quartered with his regiment for some time in New Brunswick, and after various vicissitudes he made his way to Philadelphia. During his stay in New Brunswick he had studied French, and had many opportunities of conversing in it with French-Canadians, and when settled for a time in Philadelphia he occupied himself by teaching English to some refugees from France. Now and again he went backward and forward between America and England, but it was in Philadelphia that he was first known as a writer. Under the signature of Peter Porcupine he published the "Porcupine Papers," which were chiefly made up of sarcastic and vehement attacks upon public men. Cobbett had begun as a sort of Tory, or, at all events, as a professed enemy of all Radical agitators, but he gradually became a Radical agitator himself, and when he finally settled in England he soon began to be recognized as one of the most powerful

advocates of the Radical cause in or out of Parliament. He wrote a strong, simple Anglo-Saxon style, and indeed it is not too much to say that, after Swift himself, no man ever wrote clearer English prose than that of William Cobbett. He had tried to get into Parliament twice without success; but at last he succeeded in obtaining a seat as the representative of the borough of Oldham, a place which he represented until the time of his death, and which was represented by members of his family in the memory of the present generation. He had started a paper called *The Weekly Political Register,* and in this he championed the Radical cause with an energy and ability which made him one of the most conspicuous men of the time.

Lord Grey's Government was probably not very anxious to prosecute Cobbett, if a prosecution could have been avoided, but it was feared, perhaps, by the members of the Cabinet that some of his writings would be used by the opponents of reform as an illustration of the principles on which reform was founded, and the practices which it would encourage if the Government failed to take some decided action. It was therefore decided to institute the prosecution for the article which had been published in the previous December. The Guildhall, where the case was to be tried, was crowded to excess, and the prisoner was loudly applauded when he stood in the court. He was one of the heroes of the hour with large numbers of the people everywhere, and the court would have been crowded this day in any case; but additional interest was given to the sitting by the fact that Cobbett had summoned for witnesses for his defence Lord Grey, Lord Brougham, Lord Althorp, and Lord Durham. The summoning of these witnesses was one of Cobbett's original and audacious strokes of humor and of cleverness, and his object was, in fact, to make it out that the leading members of his Majesty's Government were just as much inclined to countenance violence as he was when such a piece of work might happen to suit their political purposes. The stroke, however, did not produce much effect in this case, for Lord Brougham's evidence, which in any case would have been

unimportant to the question at issue, would have been rather to the disadvantage than advantage of the prisoner if it had been fully gone into, and Cobbett relieved Brougham from further attendance; while Chief Justice Tenterden, the presiding judge, decided that the testimony which Cobbett said he intended to draw from the other noble witnesses had nothing to do with the case before the jury. The whole question, in fact, was as to the nature of the article in the *Political Register*. The jury could not agree upon their verdict, and after they had been locked up for fifteen hours, and there seemed no chance of their coming to an understanding, the jurors were discharged and there was an end of the case. When the result was announced Cobbett received tumultuous applause from a large number of the crowd in court and from throngs of people outside. He left the court even more of a popular hero than he had been when he entered it.

Now, in studying the article itself as a mere historical document, the reader who belongs to the present generation would probably be disposed to come to the conclusion that, while it was indeed something like a direct incentive to violence, it also pointed to evils and to dangers which the wisdom of statesmanship would then have done well to fear. For the main purpose of the article was to emphasize the fact that, in the existing conditions of things, nothing was ever likely to be done for the relief of the hungry sufferers from bad laws and bad social conditions, unless some deeds of violence were employed to startle the public into the knowledge that the sufferings existed and would not be endured in patience any longer. It is unfortunately only too true that, at all periods of history, even the most recent history of the most civilized countries, there are evils that legislation will not trouble itself to deal with until legislators have been made to know by some deeds of violence that if relief will not come, civil disturbance must come. The whole story of the reign of William the Fourth is the story of an age of reform, although no particular credit can be given to the monarch himself for that splendid fact. It is a melancholy truth

that not one of these reforms would have been effected at the time or for long after if those who suffered most cruelly from existing wrongs had always been content to suffer in law-abiding peacefulness, and to allow the justice of their cause to prove itself by patient argument addressed to the reason, the sympathy, and the conscience of the ruling orders.

CHAPTER LXXIII.

THE TRIUMPH OF REFORM.

THE Reform Bill was, then, clearly on its way to success. It had passed its second reading in the House of Commons by a large, and what might well be called a triumphant, majority. Now, when a great measure reaches that stage in the modern history of our Constitution, we can all venture to forecast, with some certainty, its ultimate fate. We are speaking, it need hardly be said, of reform measures which are moved by a clear principle and have a strong and resolute band of followers. Such measures may be defeated once and again by the House of Lords, and may be delayed in either or both Houses for a considerable time; but it only needs perseverance to carry them in the end. Some of the more enlightened and intelligent Conservatives must have begun already to feel that the ultimate triumph of the reform measure was only a question of time; but then those who were opposed to every such reform were determined that, at all events, the triumph should be put off as long as possible. The House of Lords would, no doubt, throw out the Bill when it came for the first time within the range of their power; but it was resolved, meanwhile, to keep the Bill as long as possible in the House of Commons. Therefore there now set in a Parliamentary campaign of a kind which was almost quite new to those days, but has become familiar to our later times—a campaign of obstruction. After the second reading of the new Reform Bill there set in that first great systematic performance of obstruction which has been the inspiration, the lesson, and the model to all the obstructives of later years. The rules and the practices of the House of Commons offered in those times, and,

indeed, for long after, the most tempting opportunities to any body of members who were anxious to prolong debate for the mere purpose of preventing legislation. For example, it was understood until quite lately that any motion made in the House, even the most formal and technical, might be opposed, and, if opposed, might be debated for any length of time, without the Speaker having the power to intervene and cut short the most barren and meaningless discussion.

When the House goes into committee, according to the formal Parliamentary phrase, the temptation to obstruct becomes indefinitely multiplied, for in committee a member can speak as often as he thinks fit on the subject—or, at least, such was his privilege before the alterations adopted in very recent years. It may be well to explain to the general reader the meaning of what takes place when the House goes into committee. When a Bill has passed through its first and second reading it is understood that the main principles of the measure have been agreed upon, and that it only remains for the House to go into committee for the purpose of considering every clause and every minute detail of the Bill before it comes up to the House again for its third and final reading. Now the House, when it goes into committee, is still just the same House of Commons as before, except that the Speaker leaves the chair and the assembly is presided over by the Chairman of Committees, who sits not in the Speaker's throne-like chair, but in an ordinary seat at the table in front of it. There is, however, the important difference that, while in the House itself, presided over by the Speaker, a member can only speak once on each motion, in the committee he can speak as often as he thinks fit, and for the obvious reason that, where mere details are under consideration, it was not thought expedient to limit the number of practical suggestions which any member might desire to offer as the discussion of each clause suggested new possibilities of improvement. By the alterations effected recently in the rules of procedure the Speaker of the House, or the Chairman of Committees, obtains a

certain control over members who are evidently talking against time and for the sake of wilful obstruction; but in the days of Lord John Russell's Reform Bill no such authority had been given to the presiding officer.

The very motion—in ordinary times a purely formal motion—which had to be passed in order that the House might get into committee, gave to the opponents of reform their first opportunity of obstruction. The motion was that the Speaker do now leave the chair, and the moment that motion was put it was immediately met by an amendment. A Tory member raised the question that there was a mistake in one of the returns of population in the constituency which he represented, and he proposed that his constituent should be allowed to show cause in person or by counsel at the bar of the House for a rectification of the error. Lord John Russell admitted that there appeared to have been some mistake in the return, but he contended that the motion to enable the House to go into committee was not the proper time at which such a question could be raised. Every one in the House knew perfectly well the motive for raising the question just then, and after some time had been wasted in absolutely unnecessary discussion the obstructive amendment was defeated by a majority of 97. That, however, did not help matters very much, for the House had still to divide upon the question that the Speaker do now leave the chair. This was met by repeated motions for adjournment, and on every one of these motions a long discussion was kept up by some leading members of the Opposition and by their faithful followers. The reader will remember that until the motion had been carried for the Speaker to leave the chair it was still the House, and not the committee, that was sitting, and therefore no member could speak more than once on the same subject. But then this fact did not secure even that particular stage of the debate against obstruction, for there were several different forms in which the motion for adjournment might be made, and on each of these several proposals a member was entitled to speak even although he had already spoken on each motion previously proposed

to the same practical effect. Perhaps it may be as well to bring the condition of things more clearly and more practically within the understanding of the general reader, seeing that the Parliamentary obstruction which may be said to have begun with the Reform Bill became afterwards so important an instrument for good or for evil in our legislative system. The motion then is made that Mr. Speaker do now leave the chair. Thereupon Mr. Brown, Tory member, moves as an amendment that the House do now adjourn, and Mr. Brown sets forth in a lengthened speech his reasons for thinking that the House ought not to sit any longer that night. Some member of the Ministry rises and gives his reason for urging that the Speaker should be allowed to leave the chair at once, and that the House go into committee in order to consider the details of the measure. Thereupon several of Mr. Brown's friends arise, and one after another expound, at great length, their reason for supporting Mr. Brown. The ministers, by this time, have made up their minds that the best course they can follow is to let Mr. Brown's friends have all the talk to themselves, but some independent members on the side of the Government are sure to be provoked into making speeches denouncing the obstructives and thereby only helping to obstruct. At length, when all Mr. Brown's friends have had their say—and Mr. Brown, it will be remembered, cannot speak again on this particular question—a division is taken on his amendment, and the amendment is lost. Then the question is put once more for the Speaker to leave the chair, and instantly Mr. Jones, another Tory member, springs to his feet and moves as an amendment, not that the House do now adjourn, but that this debate be now adjourned, which, as every one must see, is quite a different proposition. On this new amendment Mr. Brown is quite entitled to speak, and he does speak accordingly, and so do all his friends, and at last a division is taken and the amendment of Mr. Jones has the same fate as the amendment of Mr. Brown, and is defeated by a large majority. Up comes the question once more about the Speaker leaving the chair, and up gets Mr. Robinson,

another Tory member, and moves that the House do now adjourn, which motion is strictly in order, for it is quite clear that the House might with perfect consistency refuse to adjourn at midnight and yet might be quite willing to adjourn at four o'clock in the morning. On the amendment of Mr. Robinson his friends Brown and Jones are of course entitled to speak, and so are all their colleagues in the previous discussions, and when this amendment too is defeated, then Mr. Smith, yet another Tory member, rises in his place, as the familiar Parliamentary phrase goes, and moves that this debate be now adjourned. This is really a fair summary of the events which took place in the House of Commons on this first grand opportunity of obstruction, the motion to enable the House to get into committee on the details of the Reform Bill.

It was half-past seven in the morning when the outwearied House consented to adjourn, and the story was told, at the time, that when Sir Charles Wetherell was leaving Westminster Hall with some of his Tory colleagues he observed that a heavy rain was pouring down, and he declared with a vigorous oath that if he had known of that in time he would have treated the Government to a few more divisions before giving them a chance of getting to their homes. The Bill, however, did get into committee at last, and then the work of obstruction began again and was carried on after the most systematic fashion. In committee the opportunities were ample, for the case of each constituency which it was proposed to disfranchise, or each constituency the number of whose members it was proposed to lessen, had to be discussed separately, and, of course, gave rise to an unlimited number of speeches. A committee was actually formed to prepare, organize, and apply the methods of obstruction, and of this committee no less a person than Sir Robert Peel, then one of England's most rising statesmen, afterwards to be one of her greatest statesmen, was the president. Sir Robert Peel was himself one of the most frequent speakers in the obstructive debates, and among his rivals were Sir Charles Wetherell and Mr. John Wilson Croker, a man who has

been consigned to a sort of immortality by a famous essay of Macaulay's and by Disraeli's satirical picture of him as Mr. Rigby in "Coningsby." The committee of Tory members which has been already mentioned arranged carefully, in advance, the obstruction that was to be carried on in the case of each particular constituency, and planned out in advance how each discussion was to be conducted and who were to take the leading parts in it.

Meanwhile popular feeling was rising more and more strongly as each day of debate dragged on. Some of the largest constituencies were most active and energetic in their appeals to the Government to hold out to the very last and not yield an inch to the obstructionists. A fear began to spread abroad that Lord Grey and his colleagues might endeavor to save some of the main provisions of their Bill by surrendering other parts of it to the Opposition. This alarm found expression in the cry which soon began to be heard all over the country, and became in fact the battle-cry of Reformers everywhere — the Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill. Great public meetings were held in all parts for the purpose of urging the Government to make no concessions to the political enemy. During the summer a meeting of the most influential supporters of the Government was held in the Foreign Office, and at that meeting Lord Althorp, Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced that Lord Grey and his colleagues were perfectly determined not to give way, and he declared that the Government were resolved to keep the House of Commons sitting until December, or, if necessary, until the following December, in order to pass the Bill before the rising of the House for its recess. Naturally this firm declaration had some effect on the obstructionists, especially on the rank and file of the obstructionists. Nothing discourages and disheartens obstruction so much, in the House of Commons, as a resolute announcement on the part of the Ministry that the House is to be kept together until the measure under debate, whatever it may be, is disposed of. It is a hard task, at any time, to keep the House of Commons together after the regular season for its

holiday has come on; and if the rank and file of Opposition can once be brought to believe that a certain measure is to be passed no matter what number of weeks or months it may occupy, the rank and file is very apt to make up its mind that there is no use in throwing good months after bad, and that it might be as well to get the thing done, since it has to be done, without unlimited sacrifice of personal comfort. Still, the leaders of the Tory Opposition were not deterred by Lord Althorp's proclamation from maintaining their work of obstruction for some time yet. The impatience and anger of the country rose higher and higher. A reforming member of the House was in an unlucky plight indeed if he happened to be caught by one of the amendments proposed from the benches of Opposition and, believing that it had something reasonable in it, allowed his too sensitive conscience to persuade him into supporting it by his vote. Into such a plight fell a worthy alderman of the City of London—who had been sent into the House of Commons as a Radical reformer. This well-meaning person had permitted himself to become satisfied that there was something to be said for one of the Opposition amendments, and in a moment of rash ingenuousness he voted for it. He was immediately afterwards formally censured by his constituents and by the body to which he officially belonged. He was informed by solemn resolutions that he had been sent into the House of Commons to help the Government in passing the Reform Bill, and it was more or less plainly intimated to him that he had no more right to the exercise of his independent opinion on any of the details of the measure than a private soldier on a battle-field would have to exercise his individual judgment as to the propriety of obeying or disobeying the order of his commanding officer. The poor man had to make the most fervid assurances that he had meant no harm in voting for the Opposition amendment, that he was thoroughly devoted to the cause of reform, and to the particular measure then before the House of Commons, and that never again was he to be induced by any arguments to give a vote against the Government on any sec-

tion or sentence or line of Lord John Russell's Bill. Then, and not until then, he was taken back into favor.

The Bill, however, did get through committee at last. The Government contrived by determined resistance and untiring patience to get their scheme of reform out of committee in substantially the condition they wished it to have. Then came the third reading. It was confidently assumed on both sides of the House that there would be a long debate on the motion that the Bill be now read a third time. In the House of Commons, however, it often happens that the assumption of a forthcoming debate as a certainty is itself the one cause which prevents the debates from being long. So it happened on this important occasion. Every Tory took it for granted that his brother Tories would keep the debate going for an indefinite time, and in this fond faith a good many Tories felt themselves in no hurry to get to the House, and were willing to leave the first hour or two at the disposal of their colleagues. When the sitting began, and, indeed, when the motion for the third reading came on, there were comparatively few Tories in the House, and the great leaders of Opposition were not present. There was confusion in the ranks of the Tories, and the crowded benches of the Reformers thundered with clamorous shouts of "Divide! Divide!" Now, it takes a very heroic orator indeed to continue declaiming for a long time when a great majority of the members present are bellowing at him and are drowning, by their united voices, the sounds of the words which he is trying to articulate. The members of Opposition in the House found this fact brought home to them, and, being further bewildered by the fortuitous absence of their leaders, soon gave up the struggle, and the debate collapsed, and the third reading was carried by a large majority before Sir Robert Peel, Sir Charles Wetherell, and others came in leisurely fashion into the House, filled with the assumption that there would be ample opportunity for them to carry on the debate. Even yet, however, all was not over. According to the procedure of the House, it was not enough that the motion for the third reading of the

Bill should be carried. It was still necessary to propose the motion that the Bill do now pass. The moment this motion was proposed the torrent of opposition, frozen up for a too-short interval, began to flow again in full volume. The nature of the formal motion gave opportunity for renewed attacks on the whole purpose of the Bill, and all the old, familiar, outworn arguments were repeated by orator after orator from the Tory benches. But this, too, had to come to an end. The House was no longer in committee, and each member could only speak once on this final motion. Of course, there could be motions for adjournment, and on each such motion, put as an amendment, there would be opportunity for a fresh debate; but the leaders of the Opposition were beginning to see that there was nothing of much account to be done any longer in the House of Commons, and that their hopes of resisting the progress of reform must turn to the House of Lords. So the Reform Bill passed at last through the House of Commons, and then all over the country was raised the cry, "What will the Lords do with it?"

Soon the temper of the more advanced Reformers throughout the country began to change its tone, and the question eagerly put was not so often what will the Lords do with the Bill? but what shall we do with the House of Lords? At every great popular meeting held throughout the constituencies an outcry was raised against the House of Lords as a part of the constitutional system, and no speaker was more welcome on a public platform than the orator who called for the abolition of the hereditary principle in the formation of legislators. One might have thought that the agitation which broke out all over the country, and the manner in which almost all Reformers seemed to have taken it for granted that the hereditary Chamber must be the enemy of all reform, might have put the peers on their guard and taught them the unwisdom of accepting the imputation against them, and thus proving that they had no sympathy with the cause of the people. But the great majority of the Tory peers of that day had not yet risen to the idea that there could be any

wisdom in any demand made by men who had no university education, who had not what was then described as a stake in the country. The voice of the people was simply regarded as the voice of the rabble, and the Tory peers had no notion of allowing themselves to be guided by any appeal coming from such a quarter.

The agitation of which we are speaking had been going on during the long reign of obstruction in the Commons, and there was no time lost by the Government between the passing of the Bill in the representative Chamber and its introduction in the House of Lords. On the evening of the day when the Bill was passed by the Commons, September 22, 1831, it was formally brought into the House of Lords and read a first time. It has already been explained that, according to Parliamentary usage, the first reading of any Bill is taken in the House of Lords as a matter of right and without a division. The second reading of the Bill was taken on October 3. Lord Grey, who had charge of the measure in that House, delivered one of the most impressive and commanding speeches which had ever come from his eloquent lips, not merely in recommendation of the measure itself, but in solemn warning to the peers in general, and to the bishops and archbishops in particular, to pause and consider carefully all the possible consequences before committing themselves to the rejection of a demand which was made by the vast majority of the English people.

Lord Grey was a noble illustration of what may be described as the stately order of Parliamentary eloquence. He had not the fire and the passion of Fox; he had not the thrilling genius of Pitt; and, of course, his style of speech had none of the passionate and sometimes the extravagant declamation of which Brougham was a leading master. He had a dignified presence, a calm, clear, and penetrating voice, a style that was always exquisitely finished and nobly adapted to its purpose. It would not be too much to say for Earl Grey that he might have been the ideal orator for an ideal House of Lords, if we assume the ideal House of Lords to be an assembly in which appeal

was always made to high principle, to reason, and to justice, not to passion, to prejudice, or to party. Lord Grey, so far as we can judge from contemporary accounts, never spoke better than in the debate on the second reading of the Reform Bill, and it was evident that he spoke with all the sincere emotion of one whose mind and heart alike were filled with the cause for which he pleaded. But the House of Lords just then was not in a mood to be swayed greatly by argument or by eloquence. Lord Wharncliffe moved an amendment to the effect that the Bill be read a second time this day six months. This, at least, was the shape that the motion took after some discussion, because Lord Wharncliffe, in the first instance, had concluded his speech against the second reading by the blunt motion that the Bill be rejected; and it was only when it had been pressed upon his attention that such a method of disposing of the measure would be a downright insult to the Commons that he consented to modify his proposal into the formal and familiar amendment that the Bill be read a second time this day six months. The effect would be just the same in either case, for no Ministry would think of retaining office if the discussion of its most important measure were postponed in the House of Lords for a period of six months. During the debate which followed, the Duke of Wellington spoke strongly against the Bill. On the morning of October 8 the division was taken. There were 199 votes for the amendment and 158 against it, or, in other words, for the second reading of the Bill. The second reading was therefore rejected by a majority of 41. The whole work of legislation during all the previous part of the year had thus been reduced to nothing, and the House of Lords had shown what it would do with the Bill by contemptuously rejecting it, and thus bidding defiance to the demand unquestionably made by the vast majority of the people of England, Scotland, and Ireland.

Parliament was at once prorogued, and the members who were in favor of reform hurried off to address great meetings of their constituents, and to denounce the action of the House of Lords. Popular enthusiasm was aroused

more than ever in favor of the Reform Bill, and popular passion was stirred in many places to positive fury against the principal opponents of the Bill. In London several public men who were conspicuous for their opposition to the Bill were surrounded in their carriages as they drove through the streets by suddenly collected crowds, who hooted and hissed them, and would have gone much further than hooting and hissing in their way of expressing condemnation but for the energetic intervention of the newly created police force. In some of the provincial towns, and here and there throughout the country, the most serious riots broke out. In Derby there were disturbances which lasted for several days, and consisted of attacks on unpopular persons and of fierce fights with the police. Nottingham was the centre of rioting even more serious. Nottingham Castle, the seat of the Duke of Newcastle, was attacked by a furious mob and actually burned to the ground. In the immediate neighborhood was the estate of Mr. Musters, which was invaded by an excited mob. The dwelling-house was set on fire, and, although the conflagration was not allowed to spread far, yet it ended in a tragedy which must always have a peculiar interest for the lovers of poetry and romance. The wife of Mr. Musters was the Mary Chaworth made famous by Lord Byron in his poem of the "Dream," and other poems as well—the Mary Chaworth who was his first love, and whom, at one time, he believed destined to be his last love also. Mary Chaworth does not seem to have taken the poet's adoration very seriously—at all events, she married Mr. Musters, a country gentleman of good position. Mrs. Musters was in her house on the night when it was attacked by the mob, and when the fire broke out she fled into the open park and sought shelter there among the trees. The mob was dispersed and Mrs. Musters, after a while, was able to return to her home; but she was in somewhat delicate health, the exposure to the cold night air of winter proved too much for her, and she became one of the most innocent victims to the popular passion aroused by the opposition to the Reform Bill.

Bristol was the scene of the most formidable riots during all that period of disturbance. Sir Charles Wetherell, who had made himself conspicuous as an opponent of reform, was the Recorder as well as the representative of Bristol, and his return to the city after the Lords had thrown out the Bill became the signal for an outbreak of popular fury. Houses were wrecked in various parts of the city; street fights took place between the mob and the military, day after day; the Mansion House, where Sir Charles Wetherell was supposed to have taken refuge, was besieged, attacked, and almost demolished, and Sir Charles Wetherell himself was rescued, more than once, with the utmost difficulty from hostile crowds who seemed thirsting for his blood. All these riots were atoned for dearly soon after by some who had taken part in them. The stroke of the law was heavy and sharp in those days, and many of the rioters in Derby, Nottingham, and Bristol, and other places expiated on the scaffold their offences against peace and order. Some of the cathedral cities became scenes of especial disturbance because of the part so many of the prelates who were members of the House of Lords had taken against the Reform Bill. The direct appeal which Earl Grey had made to the archbishops and bishops in the House of Lords to think long and well before opposing the Reform Bill was delivered with the highest and sincerest motive, with the desire that the Church should keep itself in harmony with the people; but the mere fact that the appeal was made, and made in vain, seems to have aroused in many parts of the country, and especially in the cathedral cities, a stronger conviction than ever that the prelates were, for the most part, the enemies of popular rights. Then, again, there was a more or less general impression that the King himself, in his heart, was not in favor of reform and would be glad to get rid of it if he could. Daniel O'Connell, addressing a great popular meeting at Charing Cross in London, pointed with his outstretched right arm towards Whitehall, and awakened a tremendous outburst of applause from the vast crowd by telling them that it was there Charles I. had lost his head

because he had submitted to the dictation of his foreign wife. There was a popular belief at the time that Queen Adelaide, the wife of King William, cherished a strong hatred against reform such as Lord Grey and his colleagues were pressing on, and that she was secretly influencing the mind of her husband her own way, and so it was that O'Connell's allusion got home to the feelings and the passions of the multitude who listened to his words. Never, in the nineteenth century, had England gone through such a period of internal storm. All over the Continent observers were beginning to ask themselves whether the monarchy in England was not on the verge of such a crisis as had just overtaken the monarchy in France.

Lord Grey and his ministers still, however, held firmly to their purpose, and the King, much as he may have disliked the whole reform business, and gladly as he would have got rid of it, if it were to be got rid of by any possible means, had still wit enough to see that if he were to give his support to the House of Lords something even more than the House of Lords might be in danger. Parliament was therefore called together again in December, and the Royal Speech from the Throne commended to both Houses the urgent necessity of passing into law as quickly as possible the ministerial measure of reform. Lord John Russell brought in his third Reform Bill for England and Wales, a Bill that was, in purpose and in substance, much the same as the two measures that had preceded it, and this third Reform Bill passed by slow degrees through its several stages in the House of Commons. Then again came up the portentous question, "What will the Lords do with it?" There could not be the least doubt in the mind of anybody as to what the majority of the House of Lords would be glad to do with the Bill if they only felt sure that they could work their will upon it without danger to their own order. There, however, the serious difficulty arose. The more reasonable among the peers did not attempt to disguise from themselves that another rejection of the Bill might lead to the most serious disturbances, and even possibly to civil war, and they were not

prepared to indulge their hostility to reform at so reckless an expense. The greater number of the Tory peers, however, acted on the assumption, familiar at all times among certain parties of politicians, that the more loudly people demanded a reform the more resolutely the reform ought to be withheld from them, and that, if the people attempted to rise up, the only proper policy was to put the people down by force. The opinions and sentiments of the less headlong among the Conservative peers had led to the formation of a party, more or less loosely put together, who were called at that time the "Waverers," just as a political combination of an earlier day obtained the title of the "Trimmers." The Waverers were made up of the men who held that their best and most patriotic policy was to regard each portion of the Bill brought before them on its own merits, and not to resist out of hand any proposition which seemed harmless in itself simply because it formed part of the whole odious policy of reform. King William is believed, at one time, to have set hopes on the efforts of the Waverers, and to have cherished a gladsome belief that they might get him out of his difficulties about the Reform Bill; as indeed it will be seen they did in the end, though not quite in the way which he would have desired.

Lord Grey introduced the third Reform Bill on March 27, 1832. The first reading passed, as a matter of course, but when the division on the motion for the second reading came on on April 14, there was only a majority of 9 votes for the Bill: 184 peers voted for it and 175 against it. Of course Lord Grey and his colleagues saw, at once, that unless the conditions were to be completely altered there would be no chance whatever in the House of Lords for a measure of reform which had passed its second reading by a majority of only 9. The moment the Bill got into committee there would be endless opportunities afforded for its mutilation, and if it were to get through the House at all, it would be only in such a form as to render it wholly useless for the objects which its promoters desired it to accomplish. This dismal conviction was very speedily veri-

fied. When the Bill got into committee, Lord Lyndhurst moved an amendment to the effect that the question of enfranchisement should precede that of disfranchisement. Now this proposal was not in itself one necessarily hostile to the principle of the Bill. It is quite easy to understand that a sincere friend to reform might have, under certain conditions, adopted the views that Lord Lyndhurst professed to advocate. But the Ministry knew very well that the adoption of such a proposal would mean simply that the whole conduct of the measure was to be taken out of their hands and put into unfriendly hands—in other words, that it would be utterly futile to go any further with the measure if the hostile majority were thus allowed to deal with it according to their own designs and their own class interest.

Lord Lyndhurst was a man of great ability, eloquence, and astuteness. He was one of the comparatively few men in our modern history who have made a mark in the Law Courts and in Parliament. As a Parliamentary orator he was the rival of Brougham, and the rivalry was all the more exciting to the observers because it was a rivalry of styles as well as of capacities. Lyndhurst was always polished, smooth, refined, endowed with a gift of argumentative eloquence, which appealed to the intellect rather than to the feelings, was seldom impassioned, and even when impassioned kept his passion well within conventional bounds. Brougham was thrilling, impetuous, overwhelming, often extravagant, scorning conventionality of phrase or manner, revelling in his own exuberant strength and plunging at opponents as a bull might do in a Spanish arena. Lyndhurst's amendment was one especially suited to bring to his side the majority of the Waverers. It was plausible enough in itself, and gave to many a Waverer, who must have had in his mind a very clear perception of its real object, some excuse for persuading himself that, in voting for it, he was not voting against the principle of reform. When the division came to be taken on May 7, 151 peers voted for the amendment and 116 against it, thus showing a majority of 35 against

the Government, by whom of course the amendment had been unreservedly opposed.

The country saw that a new crisis had come, and a crisis more serious than any which had gone before. There was only one constitutional course by which the difficulty could be got over, and that was by the King giving his consent to the creation of a number of new peers large enough to carry the Reform Bill through all its subsequent stages in the House of Lords. Other outlet of safety through peaceful means there was none. Lord Grey's Ministry could not possibly remain in office and see the measure, on which they believed the peace and prosperity of the country to depend, left at the mercy of an irresponsible majority of Tory peers. The King was most unwilling to help his ministers out of the trouble, especially by such a process as they had suggested, and in his heart would have been very glad to be rid of them and the Reform Bill at the same time. Charles Greville in his Memoirs makes several allusions to the King's well-known dislike for the Whig ministers and his anxiety to get the Duke of Wellington back again. Lord Grey and his colleagues, finding it hard to get the King to recognize the gravity of the situation, and to adopt the advice they had offered to him, felt that there was nothing left for them but to resign office. And the King was delighted to have a chance of recalling the Duke of Wellington to the position of Prime Minister. Under the date of May 17, 1832, Greville has some notes which well deserve quotation: "The joy of the King at what he thought to be his deliverance from the Whigs was unbounded. He lost no time in putting the Duke of Wellington in possession of everything which had taken place between him and them upon the subject of reform and with regard to the creation of peers, admitting that he had consented, but saying he had been subjected to every species of persecution. His ignorance and levity put him in a miserable light and proved him to be one of the silliest old gentlemen in his dominions." Greville goes on to say: "But I believe he is mad, for yesterday he gave a dinner to the Jockey Club,

at which, notwithstanding his cares, he seemed to be in excellent spirits, and after dinner he made a number of speeches so ridiculous and nonsensical beyond all belief but to those who heard them, rambling from one subject to another, repeating the same thing over and over again, and altogether such a mass of confusion, trash, and imbecility, as made one laugh and blush at the same time."

The poor muddled-headed old King in fact could not understand that the question submitted to him allowed of no middle course of compromise. He seemed to think he had gone far enough in the way of conciliation when he offered to allow his ministers to create a certain number of peers. No concession, however, could be of the slightest use to the Ministry unless the power were conceded to them to create as many new peers as might be necessary to overbear all opposition to the Reform Bill. The struggle was in fact between the existing House of Lords and the vast majority of the nation. One or other must conquer. The only constitutional way in which the existing opposition of the House of Lords could be overborne was by the creation of a number of new peers great enough to turn the majority of the House of Lords into a minority.

Lord Grey and Lord Althorp were not, it is hardly necessary to say, men who shared in the popular sentiment, which would, if it could, have abolished altogether the hereditary principle in legislation. But Lord Grey and Lord Althorp read the signs of the times, and saw clearly enough that if the House of Lords were allowed to stand much longer in the way of the Reform Bill the result would be probably a political revolution which would abolish the House of Lords altogether. Therefore the ministers could make no terms with the King short of those which they had offered, and as the King did not see his way to accept their conditions there was nothing left for them but to resign office. Accordingly Lord Grey tendered his resignation and that of his colleagues, and the King, after much indecision and mental flurry, thought he could do nothing better than to accept the resignation, and try to find a set of ministers more suitable to his in-

clinations. He sent for Lord Lyndhurst and entered into conversation with that astute lawyer and politician, and Lord Lyndhurst advised him to send for the Duke of Wellington. The Duke was sent for, but the Duke had not much to say which could lend any help to the King in his difficulties. Wellington saw distinctly enough that there was no alternative but that which lay in the choice between reform and some sort of popular revolution. We have seen already in these volumes how Wellington preferred to accept Catholic Emancipation rather than take the risk of plunging the country into civil war. In the case of the Reform Bill he would have acted, no doubt, upon the same principle if driven to the choice, but after the repeated and energetic denunciations of reform which he had delivered in the House of Lords he did not think that it would be a fitting part for him, even for the sake of helping the sovereign out of his constitutional trouble, to be the Prime Minister by whom any manner of Reform Bill should be introduced. Wellington therefore strongly urged the King to send for Sir Robert Peel, and declared that he himself would lend all the support he possibly could to a Peel Administration. Peel was sent for accordingly, but Peel was too far-seeing a statesman to believe that he could possibly hold office for many weeks unless he yielded to the full demands of the country, and his political principles would not have allowed him to go so far as that. He did his best to make it clear to the King that no administration but a reform administration could stand, and that, if a reform administration had to be accepted, there was nothing better to be done than to invite Lord Grey and Lord John Russell back again to office.

Meanwhile the country was aroused to a fervor of enthusiasm in favor of reform, which seemed only to increase with every delay and to grow stronger with every opposition. Public meetings were held in Birmingham of larger size than had ever been gathered together in England before, and resolutions were passed by acclamation which were almost revolutionary in their character. In many cities and towns appeals were made for a run on the

bank, a run for gold, and there were alarming signs that the advice was likely to be followed to such a degree as to bring about utter confusion in the money market. In the City of London an immense meeting was held, at which resolutions were passed calling on the House of Commons to stop the supplies unless the King accepted the councils of the Whig statesmen and gave them authority for the election of new peers. The overwhelming strength of the demand for reform may be easily estimated when it is remembered that the majority in the great cities and towns, and also in the counties, were for once of the same opinion. In more than one great political controversy of modern times, as in the free-trade agitation for example, it has happened that the town population were of one opinion and the county population of another. But at the time which we are now describing the great cities and towns were all nearly unrepresented, and in their demand for representation they were of one mind and one spirit with the county populations, which called out for a real and not a sham representation. There will probably always be a question of curious speculation and deep interest to the students of history as to the possibility of a great revolution in England if the King had made up his mind to hold out against the advice of the Whig statesmen and to try the last chance. It is certain that the leading Whig nobles were considering, with profound earnestness, what course it might be necessary for them to take if the King were absolutely to refuse all concession and to stand by what he believed to be his sovereign right to set up his own authority as supreme. If the choice should be forced on them, would these Whig nobles stand by the obstinate King or throw in their lot with the people? This grave question must have been considered again and again in all its bearings by the Whig leaders during that time of terrible national crisis.

It would seem to be beyond all question that some, at least, of the Whig nobles were contemplating the possibility of their having to choose between the King and the people, and that their minds were made up, should the worst come

to the worst, to side with the people. Many years afterwards, during the State trials at Clonmel which followed the Young Ireland rebellion of 1848, evidence was brought forward by the counsel for the defence of Mr. Smith O'Brien and his fellow-prisoners to prove that the Whig nobles during the reform crisis in England had been in communication with Sir Charles Napier, the great soldier, for the purpose of ascertaining how the army would act if there should come to be a struggle between the sovereign claiming despotic rights and the people standing up for constitutional government. All this, however, is now merely a question of interesting historical speculation. The King had tried Wellington, had tried Peel, had sent for Wellington a second time, and found that Wellington, though he dared do all that might become a man, saw nothing to be gained for sovereign or State by an attempt to accomplish the impossible, and William at last gave way. It was about time that he did so. William was becoming utterly unpopular with the great mass of his subjects. He who had been endowed with the title of the Patriot King was now to be an object of hatred and contempt to the crowds in the streets with whom from day to day he could not avoid being brought into contact. When his carriage appeared in one of the great London thoroughfares it was followed again and again by jeering and furious mobs, who hissed and groaned at him, and it was always necessary for his protection that a strong escort of cavalry should interpose between him and his subjects. Even in the London newspapers of the day, those at least that were in favor of reform, and which constituted the large majority, language was sometimes used about the King which it would be impossible to use in our days about some unpopular Lord Mayor or member for the City.

All this told heavily upon poor King William, who was a good-natured sort of man in his own way if his ministers and others would only let him alone, and who rather fancied himself in the light of a popular sovereign. He therefore made up his mind at last to accept the advice

of his Whig ministers and grant them the power of creating as many new peers as they thought fit, for the purpose of passing their importunate Reform Bill. The consent was given at an interview which the King had with Lord Grey and Lord Brougham, Lord Brougham as keeper of the royal conscience taking the principal conduct of the negotiations on behalf of the Government. The King, as usual on such occasions, was flurried, awkward, and hot-tempered, and when he had made up his mind to yield to the advice of his ministers he could not so far master his temper as to make his decision seem a graceful concession. Even when he announced that the concession was to be made the trouble was not yet quite over. Lord Brougham thought it necessary to ask the King for his consent in writing to the creation of the new peers, and hereupon the wrath of the sovereign blazed out afresh. The King seemed to think that such a demand showed a want of confidence in him which amounted to something like an insult, and he fretted and stormed for a while as though he had been like Petruchio "aboard carousing to his mates." After a while, however, he came into a better humor, and perhaps saw the reasonableness of the plea that Lord Grey and Lord Brougham could not undertake the task now confided to them without the written warrant of the King's authority. William therefore turned away and scratched off at once a brief declaration conferring on his ministers the power to create the necessary number of peers, qualifying it merely with the condition that the sons of living peers were to be called upon in the first instance. The meaning of this condition was obvious, and its object was not unreasonable from the King's point of view, or, indeed, from the point of view of any statesman who was anxious that the House of Lords should be kept as long as possible in its existing form. Nobody certainly wanted to increase the number of peers to any great extent, and if only the eldest sons of the living peers were to be called to the House of Lords each would succeed in process of time to his father's title and the roll of the peerage would become once again as it had been before.

The political crisis was over now. When once the royal authority had been given for the unlimited creation of new peers there was an end of all the trouble. Of course, there was no necessity to manufacture any new batches of peers. As the Reform Bill was to be carried one way or the other, whether with the aid of new peers or without it, the Tory members of the House of Lords could not see any possible advantage in taking steps which must only end in filling their crimson benches with new men who might outvote them on all future occasions. The Reform Bill passed through all its stages in the House of Lords, not without some angry and vehement discussions, during which personal recriminations were made that would have been considered disorderly at the meeting of a parish vestry. One noble lord denounced the conduct of Lord Grey as atrocious, and even the stately Lord Grey was roused to so much anger by this expression that he forgot his habitual self-control and dignity and replied that he flung back the noble lord's atrocious words with the utmost scorn and contempt.

The Bill passed its third reading in the House of Lords on June 4, 1832, and received the royal assent on June 7. The royal assent, however, was somewhat ungraciously given. King William declined to give his assent in person, a performance which, at the time, seemed to be expected from him, and it was signified only by the medium of a formal committee. The Bill, however, was passed, the third Reform Bill that had been introduced since Lord Grey had come into office. The Reform Bills for Ireland and Scotland which had gone through their stages in the House of Commons immediately after the Bills relating to England and Wales were then carried through the House of Lords. The great triumph was accomplished.

It is not without historical interest to notice the fact that a long discussion sprang up at this time and was revived again and again, during many successive years, with regard to certain words used by Lord John Russell in expressing his satisfaction at the passing of the Reform Bill. He was endeavoring to calm the apprehensions of timid

people throughout the country who feared that the whole time of Parliament would thenceforward be taken up with the passing of new and newer Reform Bills, and he declared that the Government of which he was a member had no intention but that the Reform Act should be a final measure. It might have seemed clear to any reasonable mind that Lord John had no idea of proclaiming his faith in the absolute finality of any measure passed, or to be passed, by human statesmanship, but was merely expressing the confident belief of his colleagues and himself that the Bill they had passed would satisfy the needs and the demands of the existing generation. At the time, however, a storm of remonstrance from the more advanced Liberals broke around Lord John Russell's head, and he was charged with having declared that the Reform Act was meant to be a measure for all times, and that he and his colleagues would never more set their hands to any measure intended to broaden or deepen its influence. There were indeed popular caricatures of Lord John to be seen in which he was exhibited with the title of "Finality Jack." Lord John's public career proved many times, in later days, how completely his meaning had been misunderstood by some of those whose cause he had been espousing, for all through his honored life he continued to be a leader of reform. But the common misunderstanding of the phrase was in itself significant, for it seemed to foretell the fact that the Bill, with all the great changes it had introduced and the new foundations it had laid for the future system of constitutional government, was in itself indeed far from being a final measure. The authors of the Reform Bill had left what might now be called "the masses" almost altogether out of their calculations. The rate at which the franchise was fixed for town and country rendered it practically impossible that the artisan in the town or the laborer in the country could have any chance whatever of obtaining a vote.

This was the one great defect of the Reform Bill introduced by Lord Grey and Lord John Russell. Perhaps it would not have been prudent for these statesmen, at that

time, to enter on the introduction of a more comprehensive measure. Perhaps Lord Grey and Lord John Russell would have preferred of their own judgment not to introduce too comprehensive a reform measure all at once, and to allow the franchise to broaden slowly down. But it is certain that almost immediately after the passing of the Reform Bill a profound feeling of disappointment began to grow and spread among the classes who found themselves excluded from any of its benefits, and who believed, with good reason, that they had rendered much practical service in the carrying of the measure. The feeling prevailed especially among the artisans in the cities and towns. In some of the towns the Reform Bill had distinctly operated as a measure of disfranchisement rather than of enfranchisement. In Preston, for instance, there had been so large a number of what we have called, adopting a more modern phrase, "fancy franchises" that something not very far removed from universal suffrage was attainable by the male population. These fancy franchises could not be justified on any principle commending itself to rational minds, and it was, moreover, an obvious absurdity to have one system of voting prevailing in this constituency and a totally different system prevailing in another. Therefore Lord Grey and Lord John Russell cannot be censured for their resolve to abolish the fancy franchises altogether. They were introducing an entirely new constitutional system, and it was evident that in the new system there must be some uniform principle as to the franchise. But it is none the less certain that the men who were disfranchised by an Act professedly brought in to extend the suffrage must have felt that they had good reason to complain of its direct effect upon themselves and upon what they believed to be their rights. Nearly forty years of agitation had yet to be gone through before the principal deficiencies in the Reform Act of 1832 were supplied by Liberal and Tory legislation.

Before closing this chapter of history it is fitting to take notice of the fact that the debates on the Reform Bill gave opportunity for the public opening of a great career in

politics and in literature—the career of Lord Macaulay. Thomas Babington Macaulay was a new member of the House of Commons when the first Reform Bill was introduced by Lord John Russell. He was the son of Zachary Macaulay, who was famous in his day, and will always be remembered as the high-minded philanthropist and the energetic and consistent opponent of slavery and the slave trade. Macaulay the son had, from his earliest years, given evidence of precocious and extraordinary intelligence and versatility. When he entered Parliament he found that his fame had gone before him, but his friends were not quite certain whether he was to be poet, essayist, historian, or political orator. As years went on, he proved that he could write brilliant and captivating poems; that he could turn out essays which had a greater fascination for the public than many of the cleverest novels; that he could write history which set critics disputing, but which everybody had to read; and that he could deliver political speeches in the House of Commons which, when correctly reproduced from the newspapers, appeared to belong to the highest class of Parliamentary eloquence. It may well be questioned whether any man could possibly attain supreme success in the four fields in which, from time to time, Macaulay appeared to be successful. At present we are only concerned with the speeches which he delivered in the House of Commons during the debates on the Reform Bills. Macaulay's appearance was not impressive, and he had a gift of fluency, a rapidity of utterance which continued, from first to last, to be a most serious difficulty in the way of his success as a Parliamentary orator. He appears to have committed his speeches to memory, and his memory was one of the most amazing of all his gifts; and when he rose to deliver an oration he rattled it off at such a rate of speed that the sense ached in trying to follow him, and the reporters for the newspapers found it almost impossible to get a full note of what he said. This was all the more embarrassing because his speeches abounded in illustrations and citations from all manner of authorities, authors, and historical incidents, and the bewildered re-

porter found himself entangled in proper names which shorthand in the pre-phonetic days could but slowly reproduce. The speeches, when revised by the author, were read with intense delight by the educated public, and with all the defects of the orator's utterance he soon acquired such a fame in the House of Commons that no one ever attracted a more crowded and eager audience than he did when it became known that he was about to make a speech. We may quote here a characteristic description given by Greville of his first meeting with Macaulay in the early February of 1832, while the struggle over Lord Russell's third Reform Bill was still going on. "Dined yesterday," says Greville, "with Lord Holland; came very late and found a vacant place between Sir George Robinson and a common-looking man in black. As soon as I had time to look at my neighbor, I began to speculate, as one usually does, as to who he might be, and as he did not for some time open his lips except to eat, I settled that he was some obscure man of letters, or of medicine, perhaps a cholera doctor. In a short time the conversation turned on early and late education, and Lord Holland said he had always remarked that self-educated men were peculiarly conceited and arrogant, and apt to look down on the generality of mankind from their being ignorant of how much other people knew; not having been at public schools, they are uninformed of the course of general education. My neighbor observed that he thought the most remarkable example of self-education that of Alfieri, who had reached the age of thirty without having acquired any accomplishment save that of driving, and who was so ignorant of his own language that he had to learn it like a child, beginning with elementary books. Lord Holland quoted Julius Cæsar and Scaliger as examples of late education, said that the latter had been wounded, and that he had been married and commenced learning Greek the same day, when my neighbor remarked 'that he supposed his learning Greek was not an instantaneous act like his marriage.' This remark and the manner of it gave me the notion that he was a dull fellow, for it came out in a

way which bordered on the ridiculous so as to excite something like a sneer. I was a little surprised to hear him continue the thread of conversation, from Scaliger's wound, and talk of Loyola having been wounded at Pampeluna. I wondered how he happened to know anything about Loyola's wound. Having thus settled my opinion I went on eating my dinner, when Auckland, who was sitting opposite to me, addressed my neighbor: 'Mr. Macaulay, will you drink a glass of wine?' I thought I should have dropped off my chair. It was Macaulay, the man I had been so long most curious to see and to hear, whose genius, eloquence, astonishing knowledge, and diversified talents have excited my wonder and admiration for such a length of time, and here I had been sitting next to him, hearing him talk, and setting him down for a dull fellow." We are here only at the opening of Macaulay's great career. Even at this time the world seemed to have made up its mind that Macaulay had a great career before him. At the present day, when more than forty years have passed over his tomb in Westminster Abbey, it is a question still keenly contested every now and then, whether Macaulay fully realized or barely failed to realize the expectations which men were forming of him on that day when Charles Greville met him for the first time, and was amazed to find, as the conversation went on, that he was sitting next to Macaulay.

The year of the Reform Bill was marked by an event forever memorable in the history of literature. That event was the death of Sir Walter Scott. The later years of Scott's life, as we all know, had been darkened by the failure of his publishers, by the money troubles in which that failure had involved him, by the exhausting efforts he had to make to force his wearied mind into redoubled literary exertion, and, more than all, by the loss of the wife who had been his devoted companion for so many years. No words could be more sorrowful and more touching in their simplicity than those in which Scott declared that after his wife's death he never knew what to do with that large share of his thoughts which always, in other

days, used to be given to her. He had gone out to Italy, obeying the advice of his friends, in the hope of recovering his health under warmer skies than those of his native land, but the effort was futile. It was of no use his trying to shake off his malady of heart and body by a change of air. He carried his giant about with him, if we may apply to his condition the expressive and melancholy words which Emerson used with a different application. Scott was little over sixty years of age when he died—a time of life at which, according to our ideas of longevity at the present day, we should regard a man as having hardly passed the zenith of his powers and his possibilities. He had added a new chapter to a history of the world's literature. He had opened a new school of romance which soon found brilliant pupils in all countries where romance could charm. There have been many revolutions in literary rulership since his time, but Walter Scott has not been dethroned.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

THE EMANCIPATION OF LABOR.

THE statesmen who had carried the Reform Bill soon found that they had taken upon themselves a vast responsibility. They had accomplished so great a triumph that most men assumed them to be capable of any triumph. It has to be remembered that they had succeeded in establishing one principle which, up to that time, had never been recognized, the principle that a constitutional sovereign in these countries cannot any longer set up his own authority and his own will in opposition to the advice of his ministers. Up to the days of William the Fourth, the ministers always had to give way to the sovereign at the last moment, if the sovereign insisted on maintaining his dictatorial authority. We have seen how one of the greatest of English statesmen, the younger Pitt, had bowed his judgment and even coerced into silence the remonstrances of his own heart and his own conscience, rather than dispute the authority of an obstinate and a stupid King. Lord Grey and his colleagues had compelled their King to listen to reason, and probably not even they knew at the time the full importance of the constitutional principle which they had thus established. In our own days, and under the rule of the first really constitutional sovereign who ever reigned in these countries, we seem to have almost forgotten that there ever was a time when the occupant of the throne was understood to have a right to govern the people according to royalty's own inclination or royalty's own notion of statesmanship. When the passing of the Reform Bill was yet the latest event in history, the people of these countries commonly, and very justly, regarded this assertion of the right of a representative Ministry to exact support from

the sovereign as one of the greatest triumphs accomplished by Lord Grey's Administration. The natural feeling therefore was to assume that the men who had done these great things could do greater things still, and from all parts of the realm eyes were turned upon them, full of confidence in their desire and their capacity to accomplish new reforms in every department of our constitutional and our social system.

The time was one especially favorable for such hopes and for such achievements. A new era had opened on the civilized world. New ideas were coming up regarding the value and the validity of many of our constitutional and social arrangements which had formerly been considered as inspired and sanctified forever by that mysterious influence, the wisdom of our ancestors. If education had not yet made much way among the masses of the people, at least the belief in popular education was becoming a quickening force in the minds of all intelligent men. Then, as ever since, the agitation for each great new reform began outside the walls of Parliament, and had to take an organized shape before it became a question for the House of Commons. The first great work to which the reformed Parliament applied itself, after the conditions of Lord Grey's Act had been allowed to take effect in remoulding the constituencies, was the abolition of negro slavery in the colonies of Great Britain. Domestic slavery and the slave trade had already been abolished, but in the minds of a great number of well-meaning, well-informed, and by no means hard-hearted men slavery in our colonies was a very different sort of institution from slavery in our own islands, or from the actual trade in slaves. The ordinary Englishman, when he troubled himself to consider such questions at all, had settled it in his own mind that slavery in England, or in any part of the British Isles, was incompatible with the free constitution of the realm, and that the forcible abduction of men and women from African sea-shores in order to sell them into slavery was an offence against civilization and Christianity. But this average Englishman did not see that there was anything like the same

reason for interfering with the system of slave labor as we had found it established, for instance, in our West Indian colonies. "We did not introduce the system there," it was argued; "we found it established there; we inherited it; and its continuance is declared, by all those who know, to be absolutely essential to the production of the sugar which is the source of profit and the means of living to the islands themselves, and an indispensable comfort, a harmless and healthful luxury, to millions of civilized beings who never stood under a tropical sky." The mind of the average Englishman, however, had been, for some time, much disturbed by the arguments, the pleadings, and the agitation of a small number of enlightened Reformers, at first much in advance of their time, who were making a pertinacious crusade against the whole system of colonial slavery. Some of these men have won names which will always be honored in our history. Zachary Macaulay was one of these. He was the father of the Macaulay whom we have just heard of as seated side by side with Charles Greville at Lord Holland's dinner-table. Zachary Macaulay had been the manager of a great West Indian estate, but he had given up the position because his conscience would not allow him to have anything to do with the system of slavery, and he had come home to devote his time, his abilities, and his earnestness to the generous task of rousing up his countrymen to a full sense of the horrors which were inseparable from the system. He was able to supply men like Brougham, like Fowell Buxton, and like Whitbread with practical facts beyond dispute to establish the realities of slavery in the West Indian colonies. Among the more obvious, although not perhaps even the most odious, accompaniments of the system were the frightful cruelties practised on the slaves, the flogging, the mutilation, and the branding of men, women, and children which formed part of the ordinary conditions of a plantation worked by slave labor. Over and over again it had been denied by men who professed to know all about the subject and to be authorities upon it that any such cruelties were practised on a well-regulated plantation belonging to a

civilized owner. It was constantly argued, with self-complacency, that the planter's own interests would not allow him thus to mar the efficiency of the human animals who had to do his work, and that even if the planter had no pity for them, he was sure to have a wholesome and restraining consideration for the physical value of his own living property.

Zachary Macaulay and the Buxtons, the Wilberforces and the Whitbreads, were able to give innumerable and overwhelming proofs that the system every day was working such evils as any system might be expected to work which left one set of human beings absolutely at the mercy of another set of human beings. Many years after this great controversy had won its complete success for the English colonies, a chief justice of the Supreme Court of the United States laid it down as law that a slave had no rights which his owner was bound to respect. Up to the time of which we are now writing, it was certainly assumed, in our West Indian colonies, as a self-evident doctrine, utterly beyond dispute or question, that a slave had no rights which his owner was bound to respect. The band of resolute philanthropists who had taken up the subject in England were able to show that frequent flogging of men and women was a regular part of the day's incidents of every plantation, and that branding was constantly used, not merely as a means of punishment, but also as a means of identification. It was a common practice when a female slave attempted to escape for her owner to have her branded on the breast with red-hot iron as an easy means of proving her identity if she were to succeed for a time in getting out of his reach. Numbers of advertisements were produced in which the owners, seeking through the newspapers for the recovery of some of their women slaves, proclaimed the important fact that the fugitive women were branded on both breasts, and that thus there could be no difficulty about their identification. We need not go further into the details of the subject, but it may be as well to mention that we have not touched at all upon the most revolting evidences of the horrors which seemed to

be the inevitable accompaniment of the slave system. Brougham was one of the first among leading Englishmen who threw his heart and soul into the agitation against colonial slavery. Long before that agitation approached to anything like success he had brought forward a motion in the House of Commons, directing attention to the evils and the horrors of the system, and calling for its abolition. For a time, successive Governments did not see their way to go any further than to endeavor to bring about or to enforce better regulations for the use of slave labor on the colonial plantations. Even these modest measures of reform had many difficulties to encounter. Some of the colonies were under the direct dominion of the Crown, were governed, in fact, as Crown colonies, but others had legislative chambers of their own, and refused to submit to the dictation of the authorities at home. These legislative chambers in most cases resented the interference of the home Government when it attempted to introduce new rules for the treatment of negro slaves, and the whole plantation interest rallied in support of the great principle that every owner of slaves had an absolute right to deal with them according to his own will and pleasure.

It was loudly asserted by the planters and by the friends of the planters—and of course the planters had friends everywhere in England—that the sugar-growing business could not be carried on with any profit except by means of slave labor, and that the slaves could not be got to work except by the occasional use of flogging or other such needful stimulant. The negroes, it was loudly declared, would rise in rebellion if once it became known to them that the English Parliament was encouraging them to consider themselves as slaves no longer, and their mode of rising in rebellion would simply be a simultaneous massacre of all the planters and their wives and children. "See what you are doing!" many a voice cried out to the anti-slavery agitators; "you are preaching a crusade which will not merely end in the utter bankruptcy of the West Indian Islands, but in the massacre of all the planters, their wives, and their children." The agitators, however, were neither

dismayed nor disheartened. It would have taken a good deal of sophistry to confuse the conscience of Zachary Macaulay or Wilberforce. It would have taken a good deal of bellowing to frighten Brougham. The agitation went on with increasing force, and Brougham continued to denounce "the wild and guilty phantasy" that man has property in man.

In Jamaica the colonial legislature, pressed hard by the Government at home, passed an Act with the avowed purpose of mitigating the severity of the punishments inflicted on slave laborers. The Act, however, was, even on the face of it, absurdly inadequate for any humane purpose. The home Government had demanded, among other reforms, the entire discontinuance of the flogging of women. The colonial Act allowed the flogging of women to go on just as it had done before. The Jamaica planters were indignant at the course taken by the home authorities, and raved as if they were on the verge of rebellion against the Crown, and the well-meant interference of the Government at home seemed in fact to have done more harm than good. In Demerara, which was the Crown colony, some of the more intelligent among the negro slaves had heard scraps of talk which led them to believe that the King of England and his Government were about to confer freedom upon the colored race, and these reports spread and magnified throughout certain plantations, and the slaves on one estate refused to work. Their refusal was regarded as an insurrection and was treated accordingly. The most savage measures were employed to crush the so-called insurrection, just as in more recent, and what ought to have been more enlightened, days some local disturbances in Jamaica were magnified into a general rising of the blacks against the whites, and the horrors perpetrated in the name of repression startled the whole civilized world. In Demerara an English dissenting missionary, the Rev. John Smith, who had been known as a most kindly friend of the negroes, was formally charged with having encouraged and assisted the slaves to rise in revolt against their masters. He was flung into prison, was treated with barbarous

rigors such as might have seemed in keeping with some story of Siberia; he was put through the hurried process of a sham trial in which the very forms of law were disregarded, and he was sentenced to death. Even at Demerara and at such a time the court-martial which had condemned the missionary as guilty of the offence with which he was charged had accompanied its verdict with a recommendation to mercy on account of the prisoner's previous good character. But before it could be decided whether or not the recommendation was to have any effect, the unfortunate man died of the treatment he had received.

The story of the accusation, the trial, and the death created an immense sensation in England. Brougham, Buxton, Sir James Mackintosh, the historian and scholar, and many others aroused the public indignation by their rightful denunciations of the trial and the verdict. The Government condemned and reversed the proceedings at the trial, and when Brougham brought on a motion in the House of Commons, publicly branding with just severity the whole conduct of the Demerara authorities, his motion was only defeated by a small majority. Meanwhile, the agitation against the whole system of colonial slavery was receiving new impulse and new strength from the teaching of new events in the colonies, and in May, 1830, a great meeting was held in London to demand, not the mitigation, but the total abolition of slavery in every land over which the flag of England floated. This meeting was presided over by the great abolitionist, William Wilberforce, who had been out of public life for some time owing to severe ill-health, and who believed that he could not more fitly celebrate his return to the active work of philanthropy than by taking the chair at such a demonstration. Mr. Buxton proposed a resolution calling on the country to agitate for the total abolition of slavery in the colonies, and to be content with nothing else, and the resolution was carried by enthusiastic acclamation. Brougham at once became the champion of the great London meeting by a motion which he brought forward in the House of Commons. One of the greatest speeches of his lifetime

was made in justifying his appeal to the House for the total abolition of a system which admitted of nothing like partial, or what is called moderate, reform, and must either be swept out of existence altogether or remain a curse to those who enforce it as well as to those against whom it is enforced. Brougham's motion was defeated, of course. We say of course because it was only a motion made by an independent member, as the phrase goes, and was not proposed by the leader of a strong Government, determined to stake its existence on the carrying of its proposition. Every great reform, it may almost literally be said, is heralded in Parliament by the motions of independent members, who are sure to be defeated, but whose determined efforts have success enough to make the leader of the Government, or the leader of the Opposition, feel that the time is near at hand when the cause must be taken up by one or other of the great parties in the State.

Buxton raised the whole question in the following session; and then Lord Althorp, speaking for the Government, went so far as to offer a sort of compromise by suggesting that the colonies which in the future should give evidence of their sincere resolve to make distinct improvement in the condition of their slaves should be rewarded and encouraged by a permission to send their sugar into English ports at a reduced rate of duty. The country, however, had long outgrown the condition of mind in which this feeble and ridiculous proposition could be regarded as worthy of serious consideration. The notion of sacrificing any part of the country's revenues for the purpose of bribing the planters to deal a little less severely with their slaves was not likely to find much favor among the men who had thus far conducted the great agitation against slavery. The object of reformers such as Clarkson, Wilberforce, Buxton, Brougham, and Mackintosh was not merely that the negroes should be flogged less often, or that the negro women should not be flogged at all, but that the whole abominable system which made men, women, and children the absolute property of their owners should be brought to an end forever.

At last it became evident to the Whig Ministry that something definite must be done, and that nothing would be considered definite by the country which did not aim at the total abolition of slavery. The hour had come, and the man who could best turn it to account in the House of Commons was already in his place. Lord Stanley, who had joined the Reform Ministry as Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, had since that time been moved to the higher position of Colonial Secretary, and to him was appropriately confided the task of introducing the measures which the Government had determined to take. The Lord Stanley of those days was in after years the Earl of Derby, whom some of us can still call to mind as one of the most brilliant orators in the House of Lords at a time when Brougham and Lyndhurst maintained the character of that assembly for parliamentary eloquence. Those among us who remember the eloquent Lord Derby, the Rupert of debate, remember him as a Tory Prime Minister or the Tory leader of Opposition in the House of Lords. But he began his great Parliamentary career as a Whig and as a Reformer, and he was one of the most zealous of Lord Grey's colleagues in pressing forward the great measure which was carried to success in 1832. Among those who can remember him there is only one opinion about the high order of his Parliamentary eloquence, and that opinion is that he was a worthy rival of Gladstone and of Bright. To him as Colonial Secretary was entrusted the task of bringing forward, in the House of Commons, the measures of the Government for dealing with the question of slavery in the British colonies. Stanley's speech was such a magnificent blending of reason and emotion, so close and so powerful in its arguments, so thrilling in its eloquence, that many of those who heard the speech naturally expected that it was destined to announce a bold and a comprehensive policy. A certain feeling of disappointment came up among the abolitionists when the measures were described which the Government had resolved to submit to the House of Commons. What Stanley had to propose was not a complete measure, but a

series of resolutions embodying the purposes of the Government's policy. It is enough to say that the Government proposed a plan which amounted to a scheme of abolition by stages. There was to be a certain period of apprenticeship, a term of fifteen years, during which the slaves, men and women, were to continue to work for their masters as before, under conditions gradually relaxing as the slave drew nearer to the time of emancipation, and then when that hour at length arrived the slave was to be free forever. This principle, however, was not to apply to children under six years old at the time of the passing of the measure, or to any children born after that time. The idea on which the whole scheme was founded was the notion, very common at that time and since, that the sudden emancipation of any set of human beings could only tend to bewilder them, and to prevent them from making a proper use of the freedom thus abruptly thrust upon them. "The fool in the fable," said Macaulay, when dealing with a somewhat similar question, "declared that no man ought to go into the water until he had learned to swim." Lord Grey's Ministry had apparently much the same idea about the perils of emancipation. Another part of the scheme proposed that fifteen millions should be advanced by the Government as a loan to the West Indian planters in order to help them over the diminution of income which might be expected to follow any interference with the conditions of slave labor.

The resolutions put forward by the Government were regarded as highly unsatisfactory by most of the leading abolitionists. Macaulay indeed argued with all his usual eloquence and skill in favor of the principle of gradual abolition, and it is hardly necessary to say that it was not in that speech he made use of the pithy sentence which we have already quoted. Buxton proposed an amendment to the resolution, an amendment in fact calling for immediate abolition, and the amendment was seconded by Daniel O'Connell. Buxton, however, was prevailed upon not to press his amendment on the ground that the Government were as eager for emancipation as any one could

be, and that Lord Grey and his colleagues were only anxious to bring forward such a measure as might at once secure the support of the majority and prevent further delay, while securing, at the same time, the ultimate and not distant settlement of the whole question. O'Connell stood firm, argued strongly against the proposed compromise, refused to accept it, and actually pressed Buxton's amendment to a division. Of course he was defeated by a large majority, but he carried a respectable minority along with him; and few now can doubt that the amendment which he pressed forward, even after its proposer had abandoned it, was right in its principle, and that the Government, if forced to it, could have carried a plan for immediate abolition with little more difficulty than was found in carrying the scheme of compromise. As the discussion went on the Government made some further concessions to the abolitionists, by reducing the time and modifying the terms of the apprenticeship system, and the abolitionists in general believed it their wisest policy to accept the modified arrangement and thus avoid any further delay. Another alteration of great importance was made by the Government in favor of the planters, and was finally accepted by the abolitionists and by the country in general. The friends of the planters made strong representations to the effect that the proffered loan would be of no use whatever to the owners of slaves whose property was so soon to pass from their hands into freedom, and that there was not the slightest chance of the planters being able to pay back to the English exchequer the amount that the Government was willing to advance. It was urged, too, with some show of reason, that the planters were not themselves responsible for the existence of slave labor, that generations of planters had grown up under the system and had made a profit by it during the days when civilization had not, anywhere, set its face against slavery, and that it was hard, therefore, to make them suffer in pocket for the recent development in the feelings of humanity. The offer of a loan was abandoned by the Government, and it was proposed instead that a gift of twenty millions sterling should

be tendered as compensation for the losses that the planters would be likely to undergo. This proposal, at first, met with some opposition, and by many indeed was looked upon as an extravagant freak of generosity; but some of the leading abolitionists were willing to make allowance for the condition of the planters, and most, or all, of them were prepared to make a large sacrifice for the sake of carrying some measure which promised, even by gradual advances, the final abolition of the slave system. We may condense into a very brief space the remainder of the story, and merely record the fact that the Government carried their amended measure of emancipation with its liberal grant to the West Indian planters through both Houses of Parliament, and that it obtained the royal assent.

It may easily be imagined that poor King William must have had some mental struggles before he found himself quite in a mood to grant that assent. If the King ever had any clear and enduring opinion in his mind, it probably was the opinion, which he had often expressed already, against the abolition of slavery. He had, of course, a general objection to reform of any kind, but his objection to any reform which threatened the endurance of the slave system must have been an article of faith with him. It was the fate of King William the Fourth to live in a reign of reforms, not one of which would appear to have touched his heart or been in accordance with his personal judgment. The highest praise that history can give him is that he did not at least, as one of his predecessors had done, set his own judgment and his own inclination determinedly and irrevocably against the advice of the statesmen whom he had called in to carry on the work of administration. The King gave his assent to the amended Bill for the abolition of slavery, including the generous gift to the planters, and the measure became law on August 27, 1833. Some of the colonies had the sense and spirit to discard the apprenticeship system altogether, and to date the emancipation of their slaves from the day when the measure became an Act of Parliament. In no colony did the setting free of the negroes bring about any of the troubles and turmoils, the

lawless outbreaks of blacks against whites, the massacres of the innocents, which had been so long and so often pictured as the inevitable consequences of the legislation demanded by the Clarksons, the Wilberforces, the Buxtons, and the Broughams. It seems to us all now so much a matter of course for a civilized and enlightened State to decree the extinction of slavery within its limits, that we find it hard to appreciate at its true value the difficulty and the splendor of the achievement which was accomplished by the Grey Ministry. It has to be said, however, that the Ministry and the Parliament were, in this instance, only the instruments by which the great change was wrought. The movement carried on out-of-doors, the movement set going by the leading abolitionists and supported by the people, deserves the chief honor of the victory. All the countries that make up the kingdom, England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, sent their authorized speakers to sustain the cause of freedom for the slaves. The gift, which on the recommendation of Lord Grey's Ministry was placed at the disposal of the West Indian planters, was indeed a lavish gift; but the public in general made little complaint on the score of its lavishness, and did not calculate too jealously the value of the sacrifice which the State was invited to make for the purchase of negro emancipation. Thirty years and more had to pass before the great American republic was able to free itself from the curse of slavery, and even then the late deliverance was only accomplished at the cost of a war which threatened for the season a permanent division of the States.

The same year which saw the passing of the measure for the abolition of slavery in the colonies saw also the passing of an Act which interfered seriously, for the first time, with something which might almost be called a system of domestic slavery. We are speaking now of the measure which dealt with the conditions of factory labor in these countries. Factory labor, as it was known in the early days of William the Fourth, was the growth of modern civilization. England had found that her main business in life was not the conquest and the subjection of foreign races,

or the building or the navigating of ships, or the cultivation of land, or the growth of corn, but the manufacture of goods for her own domestic use and for export all over the world. Great manufacturing cities and towns were growing up everywhere, and, while the workers on the land were becoming fewer and fewer, the workers in the city factories were multiplying every day, so that an entirely new laboring population was coming up to claim the attention of the State. Since the old days, when the whole social organization was conducted according to the dictates of some centralized authority, there had been growing up, as one of the inevitable reactions which civilization brings with it at its successive stages, a sort of vaguely expressed doctrine that the State has no right to interfere between capital and labor, between the employer and the employed. This theory naturally grew and grew with the growth of the capital invested in manufactures and the increase in the number of employers, and it was found in later years than those at which we have now arrived, that the course of agitation that Lord Ashley may be said to have begun was opposed mainly in its progress by the capitalists and the employers of labor, many of whom were thoroughly humane men, anxious to do the very best they could for the health and the comfort of those whom they employed, but who sincerely believed that the civil law had no right to interfere with them and those who worked for them, and that the civil law could do only harm and no good by its best-intentioned interference.

The whole controversy has now been long settled, and it is a distinctly understood condition of our social system that the State has a right to interfere between employer and employed when the condition of things is such that the employed is not always able to protect himself. At the time when Lord Ashley started on his long and beneficent career there was practically no law which regulated the hours and the conditions of labor in the great factories. The whole factory system, the modern factory system as we understand it, was then quite a new part of our social organization. The factory, with its little army of workers,

men, women, and children, was managed according to the will and judgment of the owner, unless in the rare cases where the demand for labor far exceeded the supply. In most places the supply exceeded the demand, and the master was therefore free to make any conditions he pleased with his workers. If the master were a humane man, a just man, or even a far-seeing man, he took care that those who worked for him should be fairly treated, and should not be compelled to work under conditions dangerous to their health and destructive of their comfort. But if he were a selfish man, or a careless man, the workers were used merely as instruments of profit by him, or by those immediately under him; and it did not matter how soon they were used up, for there could always be found numbers enough who were eager to take their places, and were willing to undertake any task on any terms, for the sake of securing a bare living. Lord Ashley raised the whole question in the House of Commons, and brought forward a motion which ended in the appointment of a commission to inquire into the condition of the men, women, and children who worked in the factories. The commission was not long in collecting a vast amount of information as to the evils, moral and physical, brought about by the overworking of women and children in the factories. The general concurrence of public opinion, even among those who supported Lord Ashley's movement, did not seem to go beyond the protection of women and children. The adult male, it was considered, might perhaps safely be left to make the best terms he could for himself; but the inquiries of the commission left little doubt among unprejudiced minds that something must be done to secure women and children from the evils of overwork. Lord Ashley succeeded in forcing the whole question on the attention of Parliament, and an Act was passed in 1833 which did not indeed go nearly as far as Lord Ashley would have carried his principle, but which at least established the right of legislative interference for the protection of children and young persons of both sexes. The Act limited the work of children to eight hours a day and

that of young persons under eighteen to sixty-nine hours a week. This Act may be regarded as the beginning of that legislative interference which has gone on advancing beneficially from that time down to our own, and is likely still to keep on its forward movement.

Lord Ashley, whom many of us can well remember as Lord Shaftesbury, may be said to have given up the whole of his life to the general purpose with which he began his public career—the object of endeavoring to mitigate the toils and sufferings of those who have to work hard in order to provide for others the comforts and the luxuries of life. His principle was that the State has always a right to interfere for the protection of those who cannot protect themselves. He was not a man of great statesmanlike ability, he was not a man of extensive or varied information, he was not a scholar, he was not an orator, he was not in the ordinary sense of the word a thinker, but he was a man who had, by a kind of philanthropic instinct, got hold of an idea which men of far greater intellect had not, up to his time, shown themselves able to grasp. The story of his life is part of the whole story of the industrial development of modern civilization. Again and again he worked with success in movement after movement, initiated mainly by himself, for the protection and the education of those who toil in our factories and in our mines. Some day no doubt Parliament may have to devise legislation which shall do for the women and children employed in field labor something like that which Lord Ashley did for the women and children employed in factories and in mines. We have seen that already efforts are made in every session of Parliament to extend the principle of the factory legislation into various industrial occupations which are common to city life. For the present, however, we have only to deal with the fact that one of the first labors accomplished by the Reformed Parliament was the establishment of that legislative principle with which Lord Ashley's name will always be associated.

Let it be added that, with the establishment of that principle, came also the introduction of two innovations in our

factory system which lent inestimable value to the whole measure. One of these was the appointment of a number of factory inspectors, who were authorized to see that the purposes of the Act were properly carried out by the employers, and to report to the Government as to the working of the whole system and the necessity for further improvements. The other was the arrangement by which a portion of the time of all the younger workers in the factories was set apart for educational purposes, so that children should no longer be treated as mere machines for the making of goods and the earning of wages, but should be enabled and compelled to have their faculties developed by the instruction suited to their years. This provision in the Factories Act may be regarded as the first step towards that system of national education which it took so much trouble and so many years to establish in these countries. Lord Ashley had great work still to accomplish; but even if his noble career had closed with the passing of the Factories Act in 1833, his name would always be remembered as that of a man who, more than any other, helped to turn the first Reformed Parliament to the work of emancipating the English laboring classes in cities and towns from a servitude hardly less in conflict with the best interests of humanity than that which up to the same year had prevailed on the plantations of Jamaica and Demerara. The Reformed Parliament had still much difficult work to call out its best energies and to employ its new resources, but it had begun its tasks well, and had already given the country good earnest of its splendid future.

CHAPTER LXXV.

THE STATE CHURCH IN IRELAND.

A SAYING which has been ascribed to a well-known living Englishman, who has made a name for himself in letters as well as in politics, may be used as the introduction to this chapter. The saying was that no man should ever be sent as Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland who could not prove that he had thoroughly mastered the meaning of the noble Irish poem rendered by Clarence Mangan as "Dark Rosaleen." The author and statesman to whom we refer used to point the moral of his observation, sometimes, by declaring that many or most of the political colleagues for whose benefit he had spoken had never heard either of Clarence Mangan or of "Dark Rosaleen." Now, as it is barely possible that some of the readers of this volume may be in a condition of similar ignorance, it is well to mention that Clarence Mangan was an Irish poet who was dear to the generation which saw the rise of the Young Ireland movement during O'Connell's later years, and that the dark Rosaleen whom Mangan found in the earlier poet's ballad is supposed to typify his native country. The idea of the author and statesman was that no Englishman who had not studied this poem, and got at the heart of its mystery, so far as to be able to realize the deep poetic, pathetic love of the Celtic heart for the soil, the traditions, and the ways of the Celtic island, could attempt with any success to undertake the government of the country. We have now come to a period in this history when the Irish question, as it is called, came up once again, and in a new form, to try the statesmanship of English rulers. We have told the story of '98, and how the rebellion ended in complete defeat and disaster. Up to the

time at which we have now arrived there was no more talk of rebellion in the field, but in the sullen heart of Irish discontent there still lived all the emotions which had animated Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Wolfe Tone, and Robert Emmet.

When the rebellion was put down the Government of King George the Third abolished the Irish Parliament, and then all loyal and sensible persons in Westminster assumed, of course, that there was an end of the matter. The rebellion had been put down, the principal rebels had been done to death, Grattan's troublesome and tiresome Parliament had been extinguished, Ireland had been merged into complete identification with England, and surely nothing would be heard of the Irish question any more. Yet the Irish question seemed to come up again and again, and to press for answer just as if answer enough had not been given already. There was a clamor about Catholic Emancipation, and at last the Irish Catholics had to be emancipated from complete political disqualification, and their spokesman O'Connell had been allowed to take his place in the House of Commons. Sir Robert Peel had carried Catholic Emancipation, for, although a Tory in many of his ways of thinking, he was a statesman and a man of genius; and now Lord Grey, the head of the Whig Government, had no sooner passed the Reform Bill than he found himself confronted with the Irish question in a new shape. We could hardly wonder that Sir Robert Peel or Lord Grey did not try to inform their minds as to Irish national feeling through a study of "Dark Rosaleen," for the good reason that no such poem had yet been given to the world. But neither Peel nor Grey was a type of the average Englishman of the times, and each had gradually borne in upon him, by a study of realities if not of poetic fancies, that the national sentiment of the Irishman was not to be eradicated by any Act of Parliament for his denationalization. Lord Grey, as the friend and pupil of Fox, who had always been the friend of Ireland, must have acquired, as a part of his early political training, the knowledge that Ireland's grievances were not all senti-

mental, and that if they were to be dealt with by Acts of Parliament these Acts must take the part of relief and not of repression. It may well be questioned whether any population is disturbed for very long by mere sentimental grievances, and it may be doubted also whether the true instinct of statesmanship does not always regard the existence of what is called a sentimental grievance as the best reason for trying to find out whether there is not some practical evil at the root of the complaint. Certainly, in Lord Grey's time, the grievances were open and palpable enough to have attracted the attention of any man whose mind was not as well contented with the wisdom of his ancestors as that of King William himself.

Just at this time, as we have seen, a school of Englishmen was springing up: Englishmen whose minds were filled with new ideas, and who thoroughly understood the tendencies of the reforming age to which they belonged. The Irish tithe question had come up for settlement. The Irish tithe question was only a part of the Irish State Church question. The Irish State Church was an institution bestowed upon Ireland by her conquerors. Five-sixths, at least, of the population of Ireland belonged to the Church of Rome and were devoted to the religion of that Church. The island was nevertheless compelled to maintain the State Church, which did not even represent the religious belief of the one-sixth of the population that was not Roman Catholic. One of the privileges of the State Church was to exact tithes from all the farmers of the country for the maintenance of its clergymen. Ireland was almost altogether an agricultural country, and had but little to do with manufacturing industry, and in three out of the four provinces of Ireland the farmers, almost to a man, held to the religion of their Catholic forefathers and worshipped only at the altars of their faith. It would be seen, therefore, that the imposition of tithes for the support of the State Church ministers was not merely a sentimental grievance, but a very practical grievance as well. It was practical because it exacted the payment of a tribute which the farmer believed he ought not to be called

upon to pay, and it was sentimental because, while it extorted the money from the farmer's pocket, it also insulted his nationality and his faith.

The result was that a sort of civil war was perpetually going on in Ireland between those who strove to collect the tithes and those from whom the tithes were to be collected. The resistance was sometimes of the fiercest character; the farmers and their friends resisted the forces sent by the Government to seize the cattle of those who refused to pay, as if they were resisting an army of foreign invaders. Blood was shed freely and lavishly in these struggles, and the shedding of blood became so common that for a while it almost ceased to be a matter of public scandal. Sydney Smith declared that the collection of tithes in Ireland must have cost in all probability about one million of lives. Police, infantry, and dragoons were kept thus in constant occupation, and yet it could not possibly be contended that those who claimed the tithes were very much the better for all the blood that was shed on their behalf. For when a farmer's cattle had been seized by the police after an obstinate fight with the farmers and their friends, and when the cattle had been driven off under the escort of infantry and cavalry soldiers, the clergyman who claimed the tithes was not always any nearer to the getting of that which the law declared to be his own. The familiar proverbial saying about the ease with which a horse may be brought to the water and the difficulty there may be in getting him to drink when he has been brought there was illustrated aptly and oddly enough in the difference between seizure of the farmer's cattle and the means of raising any money on them when they had been seized. The captured cattle could not in themselves be of much use to the clergyman who claimed the tithes, and they would naturally have to be sold in order that he might get his due, and the question arose who was to bid for them. All the farmers and the peasantry of the country were on the one side, and on the other were the incumbent, a few of his friends, and the military and police. It was certain that the soldiers and the policemen would not bid for the cattle, and probably

could not pay for them, and the population of the district would have made the place very uncomfortable for any of the clergymen's friends who showed an anxiety to buy up the impounded beasts. In some cases when cattle were sold by public auction no bidder ventured to come forward but the farmer himself who owned the cattle, and they had to be knocked down to him at a purely nominal price because there was no possible competitor. The farmer drove home his beasts amid the exultation of the whole neighborhood, and the clergymen was as far off his tithes as ever. The passive resistance in fact was harder to deal with, as far as practical results went, than even the resistance that was active. Summon together by lawful authority a number of soldiers and police, and it is easy to shoot down a few unarmed peasants, and to dispose for the hour of popular resistance in this prompt and peremptory way. But what is to be done when the resistance takes the form of a resolute organized refusal to pay up the amounts claimed or to offer any price for the cattle seized in default of payment? There were in every district numbers of quiet Catholic parishioners who would much rather have paid their share of the tithes to the Protestant clergymen than become drawn into quarrels and local disturbances and confusion. But such men soon found that if they paid their tithes they put themselves in direct antagonism to the whole mass of their Catholic neighbors. Intimidation of the most serious kind was sometimes brought to bear upon them, and in any case there was that very powerful kind of intimidation which consists in making the offender feel that he has brought on himself the contempt and the hatred of nearly all his fellow-parishioners and his fellow-religionists. In those days it was not lawful to hold a public political meeting in Ireland, but there were anti-tithe demonstrations got up, nevertheless, over three parts of Ireland. These demonstrations took the outward form of what were called hurling matches, great rivalries of combatants, in a peculiar Irish game of ball. Each of these demonstrations was made to be, and was known to be, a practical protest against the collection of the tithes. When-

ever it became certain that the recusant farmer's cattle were to be seized, a great hurling match was announced to be held in the immediate vicinity, and the local magistrates, who perhaps had at their disposal only a few handfuls of police or soldiery, were not much inclined to order the seizure in the presence of such a cloud of witnesses. Nor would any Catholic parishioner who had quietly paid up his tithes without resistance have felt very comfortable if he had happened to come near the hurling field that day, and to hear the loudly expressed comments of his neighbors on his line of conduct. To make the troubles still deeper, it often happened that the claimant of the tithes was an absentee—the incumbent of many a parish in Ireland left his curate to look after his flock and his tithes alike—and the absentee was almost as much hated in Ireland as the tithe-collector.

Now it must not be supposed that there were not many of the Protestant clergy in Ireland who utterly disapproved of the tithe system. One Protestant clergyman in England, from whom we have just quoted, the Rev. Sydney Smith, had denounced the system over and over again in language the most indignant and the most scornful that even his scathing humor could command. But there were numbers of Protestant clergymen in Ireland who saw and proclaimed its injustice and its futility. The Archbishop of Dublin declared that no Government could ever accomplish the collection of tithes in Ireland otherwise than at the point of the bayonet. Protestant country clergy often found that the very attempts to collect the tithes only brought increased distress and hardship upon themselves.

Many a poor Protestant clergyman saw the utter injustice of the system, and disliked and detested it almost as much as the Roman Catholics themselves could have done. There were many such men, too, who put up with miserable poverty rather than make any attempt to recover such an income by force. Great English speakers and writers were beginning to denounce the whole system. Macaulay stigmatized it as severely as Sydney Smith had done. George

Grote, the historian of Greece, who had then a seat in the House of Commons, had not only condemned it, but had condemned the whole State Church system of which it was only a part. In our own days the ordinary English reader finds it hard to understand how any such system could have been carried on under a civilized European Government. Such a reader will readily admit that Sydney Smith had not gone beyond the limits of sober assertion when he declared that "there is no abuse like it in all Europe, in all Asia, in all the discovered parts of Africa, and in all we have ever heard of Timbuctoo." The subject had been brought up in Parliament by some of the advanced reformers of the day, and, indeed, it was bringing itself before the notice of Parliament every week through the official reports of the disturbances which were taking place in various parts of Ireland.

The House of Lords had appointed a committee to inquire into the whole subject. The committee reported that a complete extinction of the tithe system was demanded, not only in the interests of Ireland but in the interests of the State Church itself, and suggested, as a means of getting out of the difficulty, that the tithes might be commuted for a charge upon land or by an exchange for an investment in land. This meant, in other words, that the collection of tithes should be devolved upon the landlord, leaving him to repay himself by a corresponding addition to the rent which he asked from his tenants. The House of Commons also appointed a committee to inquire into the subject, and the recommendation of that committee was in substance very much the same as the recommendation made by the committee appointed by the House of Lords.

The Government then took up the question, and in 1832 Lord Althorp announced that it was the intention of ministers to submit to the House of Commons a scheme of their own as a temporary settlement of the Irish tithe question, and out of which was to be developed, in time, a measure for the complete removal of the difficulty. A very brief description will serve to explain the nature of

this measure. The Government proposed to advance a certain sum of money for the relief of the tithe-owners who had not been able to recover what the law held to be their due, and in the meantime to apply themselves to the preparation of some scheme which might transfer the tithe burden from the occupiers to the owners of the land. The Government thus admitted that at the moment they did not see their way altogether out of the tithe difficulty, but promised to apply their minds to the discovery of some final and satisfactory settlement, and undertook until then to pay to incumbents the arrears of tithes, and to collect the money as well as they could from the indebted occupiers. In point of fact, Lord Althorp and his colleagues proposed to become the tithe-collectors themselves and to let any loss that might be incurred fall, for the time, upon the State and the national taxpayers. The plan was tried for a while, and we need hardly say that it proved altogether unsatisfactory. The Government had no better means of compelling the farmers to pay the tithes than those means which they had already vainly put at the disposal of the tithe-owners. The farmer who could not be coerced by the police and the military into settling his accounts with the incumbent was not likely to be any the more ready to pay up because the demand for payment was made by the Lord-Lieutenant.

It was becoming more and more evident every day that the whole conditions of the State Church in Ireland were responsible for the trouble of which the tithes difficulty was only an incident. Already a party was forming itself in the House of Commons composed of intellectual and far-seeing men who recognized the fact that the Irish State Church was in its very principles an anomaly and an anachronism. On May 27, 1834, a debate on the whole question of the Irish State Church and its revenues was raised in the House of Commons by Mr. Henry Ward, one of the most advanced reformers and thoughtful politicians whom the new conditions of the franchise had brought into Parliament. Henry Ward was a son of that Plumer Ward who was at one time famous as the author of a novel

called "Tremaine." If any memory of "Tremaine" lingers in the minds of readers who belong to the present generation, the lingering recollection is probably only due to the fact that in Disraeli's "Vivian Grey" there is an amusing scene in which the hero makes audacious use of an extemporized passage, which he professes to find in Plumer Ward's novel. Henry Ward, the son, afterwards won some distinction by his administration of the Ionian Islands while the islands were under the charge of Great Britain. In our Parliamentary history, however, he will always be remembered as the author of the first serious attempt to obtain a national recognition of the principle which, within our own times, secured its final acknowledgment by the disestablishment of the Irish Church. The resolution which was proposed merely declared that the Protestant Episcopal Establishment in Ireland exceeded the wants of the Protestant population, and that, it being the right of the State to regulate the distribution of Church property in such manner as Parliament might determine, it was the opinion of the House that the temporal possessions of the State Church in Ireland ought to be reduced. This resolution went no further in words, as it will be seen, than to ask for a reduction of the revenues of that Church on the ground that it had already more funds than were required for the full discharge of its duties among those who attended its ministrations. But then the resolution also assumed the right of the State to institute an inquiry into the application of the revenues and the needs of the surrounding population, and would necessarily carry with it the assertion of the principle that the Irish State Church existed only to minister to the wants of the Protestants of Ireland. It is clear that if once this principle were recognized by the State the whole theory of the Established Church in Ireland could no longer be maintained. That theory was that the State had a right to uphold and a duty to perform in the maintenance of a Protestant Establishment in Ireland for the purpose of converting to its doctrines that vast majority of the Irish population who could not be driven, even at the bayonet's point, to attend the

services conducted by a Protestant pastor. Only a few years after this time the great statesman who was afterwards to obtain from Parliament the disestablishment of the Irish Church was arguing, in his earliest published work, that the fewer the Protestants in Ireland the greater was the necessity for the State to be lavish of its money with the object of converting the outer population of Ireland to the established religion. Mr. Ward, in his speech, set himself to make it clear to the House of Commons that the collection of tithes in Ireland was, at that time, the principal cause of the disturbance and disaffection which brought so much calamity on the unhappy island, and prevented any possibility of its becoming a loyal part of the British dominions. He showed by facts and figures that the opposition to the collection of tithes was not any longer confined to the Catholic population alone, but had spread among the Protestants of dissenting denominations, and was showing itself in the North of Ireland, as well as in the provinces of the South and the West and the Midlands. He pointed to the fact that it was found necessary to maintain in Ireland, for the purpose of collecting the tithes, an army larger than that which England needed for the maintenance of her Indian Empire, and that, nevertheless, it was found impossible to collect the tithes in Ireland, and that the Government could suggest nothing better than a project for the payment of the tithes out of the pockets of the national taxpayer. Mr. Ward made it clear to the House of Commons that the revenues of the State Church in Ireland were not distributed with anything like a view to the fair and equal remuneration of its clergy. In numbers of cases the clergy of the higher ranks had enormous incomes, quite out of all proportion to any duties they were even supposed to perform, while the clergymen who actually did the work were, as a general rule, screwed down to a pitiful rate of payment which hardly kept soul and body together. Twenty pounds a year was not an uncommon stipend among the curates who did the hard work, while an annual revenue of sixty pounds was regarded as something like opulence. Where the curate received his thirty

or forty pounds a year or less, the incumbent usually had his two thousand a year, and in many instances much more. As we said before, the incumbent deriving a rich revenue from his office was often habitually an absentee, who left the whole of his work to be performed, as best it might be done, by the curate, half starving on a miserable pittance. Mr. Ward made out a case which must have produced some impression on any Parliamentary assembly, and could hardly fail to find attentive listeners and ready sympathy among the members of the first reformed House of Commons.

The motion was seconded by a remarkable man in a remarkable speech. Mr. George Grote, afterwards famous as the historian of Greece, was one of the new members of Parliament. He was a man of a peculiar type, of an intellectual order which we do not usually associate with the movement of the political world, but which is, nevertheless, seldom without its representative in the House of Commons. Grote was one of the small group of men who were, at that time, described as the philosophical Radicals. He acknowledged the influence of Bentham; he was a friend and associate of the elder and the younger Mill; he was a banker by occupation, a scholar and an author by vocation; a member of Parliament from a sense of duty. Grote, no doubt, was sometimes mistaken in the political conclusions at which he arrived, but he deserved the praise which Macaulay has justly given to Burke, that he was always right in his point of view. With Grote a political measure was right or wrong only as it helped or hindered the spread of education, human happiness, and peace. He was one of the earliest and most persevering advocates of the ballot system at elections, and during his short Parliamentary career he made the ballot the subject of an annual motion. Some of us can still well remember George Grote in his much later days, and can bear testimony to the fact that, to quote the thrilling words of Schiller, he reverenced in his manhood the dreams of his youth. We can remember how steady an opponent he was of slavery, and how his sympathies went with the cause of the North during the

great American civil war. One can hardly suppose that Grote's style as a speaker was well suited to the ways of the House of Commons, but it is certain that whenever he spoke he always made a distinct impression on the House. Some of us who can remember John Stuart Mill addressing that same assembly at a later day, can probably form an idea of the influence exercised on the House by the man who seemed to be thinking his thoughts aloud rather than trying to win over votes or to catch encouraging applause. Grote's speech on Ward's motion brought up one view of the Irish Church which especially deserved consideration. Grote dealt with the alarms and the convictions of those who were insisting that to acknowledge any right of Parliament to interfere with the Irish State Church would be to sound in advance the doom of the English State Church as well. He pointed out that, whatever difference of opinion there might be as to the general principle of a State Establishment, the case of the two Churches, the English and the Irish, must be argued upon grounds which had nothing in common. Every argument which could be used, and must be used, for the State Church of England was an argument against the State Church in Ireland. The State Church of England was the Church to which the vast majority of the English people belonged. It ministered to their spiritual needs, it was associated with their ways, their hopes, their past, and their future. If an overwhelming majority in any country could claim the right, by virtue of their majority, to set up and maintain any institution, the Protestant population of England could claim a right to set up a State Church. But every word that could be said in support of the English State Church was a word of condemnation and of sentence on the State Church in Ireland. The Irish State Church was the Church of so small a minority that, when allowance had been made for the numbers of dissenting Protestants in Ireland, it was doubtful whether one in every twelve of the whole population could be claimed as a worshipper in the temples maintained and endowed by law. Moreover, the Irish State Church was a badge of conquest, and was

regarded as such by the whole Celtic population of the island. The tithe exacted from the Irish Catholic farmer was not merely a tribute exacted by the conqueror, but was also a brand of degradation on the faith and on the nationality of the Irish Celt who was called upon to meet the demand. The student of history will note with some interest that, at a day much nearer to our own, the Lord Stanley whose name we shall presently have to bring up in connection with this debate on Mr. Ward's motion made use, in the House of Lords, of an appeal which suggested the idea that he had not heard or had forgotten George Grote's speech on which we have just been making comment. Not very long before his death Lord Derby, as he had then become, was declaiming in the House of Lords against the proposal to disestablish the Irish State Church, and he warned the House that if the fabric of the Irish Church were to be touched by a destroying hand it would be in vain to hope that the destruction of the English State Church could long be averted. Lord Derby had always a very happy gift of quotation, and he made on this occasion a striking allusion. He reminded the House of that thrilling scene in Scott's "Guy Mannering" where the gypsy woman suddenly presents herself on the roadside to the elder, the Laird of Ellangowan and some of his friends, and, complaining of the eviction of her own people from their homesteads, bids the gentlefolk take care that their own roof-trees are not put in danger by what they had done. Lord Derby made use of this passage as a warning to the prelates and peers of England that, if they allowed the Irish State Church to be disestablished, the statelier fabric of their own Church in England might suffer by the example. It was pointed out at the time, by some of those who commented on Lord Derby's speech, that George Grote had answered this argument by unconscious anticipation, and had shown that the best security of the English State Church was the fact that it rested on a foundation totally different from that of the State Church in Ireland.

The Government were greatly embarrassed by all this

discussion as to the condition, the work, and the character of the Establishment in Ireland. Lord Grey, whose whole nature inclined him to move along the path of progress with slow, steady, and stately steps, began to chafe against the eagerness with which the more Radical reformers were endeavoring to hurry on the political movement. It was necessary that the Government should announce a purpose of one kind or another—should either give a general sanction to the inquiry into the claims and merits of the Irish Church, or declare themselves against any movement of reform in that direction. It was found hardly possible for the Government to ally themselves with the followers of old-fashioned Toryism, and it soon began to be rumored that Lord Grey could only keep on the reforming path at the cost of losing some of his most capable colleagues. Before long it was made publicly known that the rumors were well founded. Lord Stanley and Sir James Graham resigned their places in the Ministry. Graham afterwards held office in more than one Administration that might well be called Liberal, but Lord Stanley passed the greater part of his Parliamentary life in the ranks of uncompromising Toryism. He had begun his public career as an enthusiastic champion of Parliamentary reform, and he was the figure-head of reform again at a much later date, but on all other questions he remained a steadfast and a most eloquent advocate of genuine Tory principles. It may fittingly be mentioned here that the existence of the Radical party, recognized as such and regarded as distinct from the ordinary Liberals, began with the debates on the State Church in Ireland. The passing of the Reform Bill divided the Whigs and Tories into Liberals and Conservatives, and the discussions on the Irish Church divided those who had once been Whigs into Liberals and Radicals.

Meanwhile poor old King William was greatly concerned by the attacks which were made upon the State Church in Ireland. William the Fourth had a simple sort of piety of his own, and was perhaps somewhat like the man whom Doctor Johnson commended because, whatever

follies or offences he might have committed, he never passed a church without taking off his hat. The King knew little or nothing, we may well suppose, about the Irish Church and the way in which it fulfilled, or had any chance of fulfilling, its sacred office. But he took off his hat to it as a Church, and, more than that, he shed tears and positively blubbered over its hard fate in having to stand so many attacks from its enemies. The King received, on one of his birthdays, a delegation from the prelates of the Irish Church, and to them he poured out his assurances that nothing should ever induce him to abandon that Church to its ungodly foes. He reminded the prelates that he was growing an old man, that his departure from this world must be near at hand, that he had nothing left now to live for but the rightful discharge of his duties as a Protestant sovereign, and he bade them to believe that the tears which were bedewing his countenance were the tears of heartfelt sympathy and sorrow. The King nevertheless did not get into any quarrel with his ministers on the subject of the Irish Church, and when any documents bearing on the question were presented to him for signature he ended by affixing his name and did not allow his tears to fall upon it and blot it out. The Duke of Cumberland, too, stood by the Irish Church to the best of his power. A member of the House of Lords has a privilege which is not accorded to a member of the House of Commons—he can enter on the books of the House his written protest against the passing of any measure which he has not been able to keep out of legislation. The Duke of Cumberland entered his protest against some of the resolutions taken with regard to the Irish State Church, and he declared that the sovereign who affirmed such resolves must do so in defiance of the coronation oath. That coronation oath had not been brought into much prominence since the days of George the Third, when it used to be relied upon as an impassable barrier to many a great measure of political justice and mercy. The Duke of Cumberland was not exactly the sort of man who could quicken it anew into an animating influence, and King

William did what his ministers advised him to do, and the world went on its way. The King, however, liked his ministers none the more because he did not see his way to quarrel with them when they advised him to make some concessions to public feeling on the subject of the Irish tithes. Thus far, indeed, the concessions were not very great, and the important fact for this part of our history is only that the tithe question brought up the far more momentous question which called into doubt the right to existence of the Irish State Church itself. The Government went no farther, for the time, than to offer the appointment of a commission to inquire into the incidence and the levying of the tithes, and endeavored to evade the question of appropriation, that is, the question as to the right of Parliament to decide the manner in which the revenues of the Irish State Church ought to be employed. The tithe question itself was finally settled for England before it came to be finally settled for Ireland. But its settlement involved no such consequences to the English State Church as it did to the State Church in Ireland. For our present purposes it is enough to record the fact that the earliest clear indications of the national policy, which in a later generation disestablished the Irish State Church, were given by the first Reform Parliament. Meanwhile the controversy raised as to the position of the Irish Establishment had had the effect of disturbing Lord Grey, who did not like to be driven too rapidly along the path of reform; of greatly angering the sovereign, who grumbled all the more because he could not openly resist; and of dissatisfying men like Ward and Grote and Lord Durham, and even members of the Cabinet like Lord John Russell, who could not regard mere slowness as a virtue when there was an obvious wrong to be redressed.

CHAPTER LXXVI.

"ONLY A PAUPER."

THE spirit of reform was impelling Lord Grey's Government in other directions as well as in those which led to the abolition of slavery in the Colonies, the improved conditions of the factory works and the introduction of some better method for the collecting of tithes. The state of the poor laws all over the country had long been attracting the attention of thoughtful, philanthropic, and at the same time practical men. The administration of relief to the poor was still conducted, up to Lord Grey's reforming Administration, on the same general principle as that which had been embodied in the famous statute of Queen Elizabeth. The manner in which that principle had been working during the intervening centuries was only another illustration of Burke's maxim about systems founded on the heroic virtues to which we have lately made reference in this volume. The statute of Elizabeth was based on the principle that the State, or at least the local authorities, ought to find relief for all the deserving poor. The duty of making provision for the deserving poor was left in the hands of those who managed the affairs of the parishes, of whom the local clergy and magistrates were the principal personages. The means had to be furnished by the taxpayers, and the influential men of each parish were left to decide as to the claims and the deserts of the applicants. There was no regular body answerable to public opinion, nor was there indeed any practical way in which the public of a district could very effectively express itself. Nothing could be better arranged for the development of that benevolent spirit which Sydney Smith describes as common to all humanity, and

under the influence of which no sooner does A hear that B is in distress than he thinks C ought at once to relieve him. Men and women had only to go and say that they were in distress, and some influential persons in the neighborhood were sure to find that the easiest way of doing a benevolent act was to provide them with orders for parochial relief inside or outside the workhouse. There seemed to be a sort of easy-going impression prevailing everywhere that when a man or a woman or a family had once been set down for relief from the rates the enrolment ought to endure as a kind of property for life, and even as an inheritance for future generations. The grant of parish relief under the old ways has been humorously likened to a State pension, which, when it has once been given, is never supposed to be revoked during the lifetime of the privileged pensioner. But the presumption in the case of those relieved by the parish had a still more abiding efficacy, for it was assumed that if a man got parish relief for himself and his family the beneficent endowment was to pass onward from generation to generation. It is quite certain that whole races of paupers began to grow up in the country, one family depending on the rates engendering another family, who were likewise to be dependent on the rates. Thus the vice of lazy and shiftless poverty was bequeathed from pauper sire to son. In the case of the ordinary man or woman there was no incitement to industry and perseverance. The idle pauper would be fed in any case, and no matter how hard he worked at the ordinary labor within his reach he could only hope to be poorly fed. Indeed, even the man who had an honest inclination for honest labor was very much in the condition of the Irish cottier tenant, described many years afterwards by John Stuart Mill as one who could neither benefit by his industry nor suffer by his improvidence.

The system may be said without exaggeration to have put a positive premium on immorality among the poorer class of women in a district, for an unmarried girl who had pauper offspring to show was sure to receive the liberal benefit of parochial relief. Pity was easily aroused for

her youth, her fall, her deserted condition when her lover or betrayer had taken himself off to some other district. Any tale of deceived innocence was readily believed, and so far as physical comforts go the unmarried mother was generally better off than the poor toiling and virtuous wife of the hard-worked laborer who found her family growing and her husband's wages without any increase. Then, of course, there was all manner of jobbery, and a certain kind of corruption among parish officials and the local tradesmen and employers of labor generally, which grew to be an almost recognized incident of the local institutions. Labor could be got on cheaper terms than the ordinary market rates if the employers could have men or women at certain seasons of the year whom the parish was willing to maintain in idleness for the rest of the time. Small contracts of all kinds were commonly made, in this sort of fashion, between parish officials and local employers, and the whole system of relief seemed to become converted into a corrupting influence, pervading the social life and showing its effects in idleness, immorality, and an infectious disease of pauperism. Owing to the many misinterpretations of the laws of settlement it was often easy for a rich and populous district to fling much of its floating pauperism on some poorer region, and thus it frequently happened that the more poverty-stricken the parish the greater was the proportion of unsettled pauperism for which it had to provide. In many districts the poorer classes of ratepayers were scarcely a degree better off than the actual paupers whom they were taxed to support. Thus many a struggling family became pauperized in the end because of the increase in the rates which the head of the family could no longer pay, and the exhausted bread-winner, having done his best to keep himself and his family independent, had at last to eat the bread of idleness from parish relief, or to starve with his family by the road-side.

Things had come to such a pass indeed that many earnest and capable observers, like Lord Brougham, Mr. Nassau Senior, and Miss Martineau, were beginning to advocate the doctrine that no remedy could be found for

the system of legalized poor relief short of its total abolition. It was gravely contended by many reformers, whose guiding spirit was pure love of humanity, that the best course for the Government to take would be to abolish the poor-relief system altogether, and leave the really deserving poor to the mercy of private benevolence. By such a measure, it was contended, private charity would be left to find out its own, and would, before long, find out its own, and the charity thus given would carry with it no demoralizing effect, but would be bestowed, as all true charity is bestowed, with the object of enabling those whom it helped to help themselves after a while. The owner of an estate, it was argued, can easily find out where there is genuine distress among those who depend upon him, and can sustain them through their time of need, so that when their hour of sickness or enforced idleness is over they may be able to begin again with renewed energy, and work with the honest purpose of making themselves independent. It was urged that the operation of the legalized poor law relief could only create new pauperism wherever its unwholesome touch was felt. It would impress on the well-inclined and the industrious the futility of honest and persevering endeavor, inasmuch as idleness could get itself better cared for than laborious poverty. Idleness and immorality, it was argued, were well housed and fed, while honest independence and virtue were left outside in cold and hunger.

The study of political economy was even already beginning to be a part of the education of most men who took any guiding place or even any observant interest in the national life. Writers who dealt with such subjects were beginning to find readers among the general public. Some of the members of Lord Grey's own Administration had taken a close interest in such questions. The whole subject of poor relief and its distribution was one of the earliest which came under the consideration of the Liberal Government after the passing of the Reform Bill. It was clear that something would soon have to be done, and, as the Whig ministers had a good deal of other work on their

hands, the natural course, at such a time, was to appoint a commission which should inquire into the whole system of poor-law relief, and report to the Government as to the best means for its reorganization. Such a commission was appointed and set at once to its work. Among the commissioners and the assistant-commissioners nominated for the purpose were some men whose names are well remembered in our own days. One of those was Mr. Nassau Senior, a man of great ability and wide practical information, who distinguished himself in many other fields of literary work, as well as that which belonged to what may be called the literature of pure economics. Another was Mr. Edwin (afterwards Sir Edwin) Chadwick, who was a living and an active presence, until a very short time ago, among those who devoted themselves to the study and the propagation of what are called social science principles, and whose work was highly valued by so well qualified a critic as John Stuart Mill. The commission made careful inquiry into the operation of the poor-law relief system, and presented a report which marked an epoch in our social history, and might well have a deep interest even for the casual student of to-day. The result of the inquiries made was such as to satisfy the commissioners that the administration of the poor law had increased the evils of pauperism, wherever it found them already in existence, and had created and fostered evils of the same kind, even in regions which had not known them before they were touched by its contagion. The report of the commissioners pronounced that the existing system of poor law was "destructive to the industry and honesty and forethought of the laborers, to the wealth and morality of the employers of labor and the owners of property, and to the mutual good-will and happiness of all." This may be thought a very sweeping condemnation, but the more closely the evidence is studied the more clearly it will be seen that where the poor-relief system had any effect worth taking into calculation this was the sort of effect it produced. The real objects of the legalized poor-law relief system were well and even liberally described in the report of the

commissioners. The object of poor relief, as the commissioners defined it, should be to make provision for that proportion, to be found in almost every community, which is plunged into such a condition of distress that it never can hope to be self-supporting again, and for that more fluctuating proportion made up of those who at the time are unable to support themselves, but whom some temporary relief may enable to return to their former condition of independence. In each class of cases it ought to be made equally clear, before public relief were called in, that those in distress, continuous or temporary, had no near relatives in a condition to afford them reasonable assistance without undue sacrifice. Of course it was understood that these conditions included the men and women who, owing to some temporary lack of employment, were actually unable to find the means of living by their own honest labor. The ideas of the commissioners were not pedantically economical in their range, nor did they insist that public relief must be given only as the reward of personal integrity when visited by undeserved misfortune. It was freely admitted that even where men and women had allowed themselves, by idleness or carelessness, to sink into actual poverty, it was better to give them temporary relief at the public expense than allow them to take up with the ways of crime, or leave them to pay the penalty of their wrongdoings by death from starvation. But it was strictly laid down that a healthy system of public relief was to help men and women for a time, in order that they might be able to help themselves once again, as soon as possible, and to make provision for those who had done their work and could do no more, and who had no near relatives in a condition to keep them from starvation. The report of the commissioners pointed out that the existing system "collects and chains down the laborers in masses, without any reference to the demand for their labor; that, while it increases their numbers, it impairs the means by which the fund for their subsistence is to be reproduced, and impairs the motives for using those means which it suffers to exist; and that every year and every day these evils are becoming

more overwhelming in magnitude and less susceptible of cure."

The passages which we have quoted are taken from the recommendations of Mr. Chadwick. He goes on to say that, "of those evils, that which consists merely in the amount of the rates—an evil great when considered by itself, but trifling when compared with the moral effects which I am deploring—might be much diminished by the combination of workhouses, and by substituting a rigid administration and contract management for the existing scenes of neglect, extravagance, jobbery, and fraud." Mr. Chadwick points out that "if no relief were allowed to be given to the able-bodied or to their families, except in return for adequate labor or in a well-regulated workhouse, the worst of the existing sources of evil—the allowance system—would immediately disappear; a broad line would be drawn between the independent laborers and the paupers; the numbers of paupers would be immediately diminished, in consequence of the reluctance to accept relief on such terms, and would be still further diminished in consequence of the increased fund for the payment of wages occasioned by the diminution of rates; and would ultimately, instead of forming a constantly increasing proportion of our whole population, become a small, well-defined part of it, capable of being provided for at an expense less than one-half of the present poor rates." And finally it was urged that "it is essential to every one of these improvements that the administration of the poor laws should be intrusted, as to their general superintendence, to one central authority with extensive powers; and, as to their details, to paid officers, acting under the consciousness of constant superintendence and strict responsibility." On these reports and recommendations the new measure for the reorganization of the poor-law system was founded. The main objects of the measure were to divide these countries, for poor-relief purposes, into areas of regular and, in a certain sense, of equal proportions, so that the whole burden of poverty should not be cast for relief on one particular district, while a neighboring and much richer dis-

trict was able to escape from its fair measure of liability; to have the relief administered not by local justices, or parish clergymen, but by representative bodies duly elected and responsible to public opinion; and by the creation of one great central board charged with the duty of seeing to the proper administration of the whole system. Thus, it will be observed that the main principle of the Reform Bill, the principle of representation, had been already accepted by statesmanship as the central idea of a department of State which had nothing to do with the struggles of political parties.

The measure when it came before Parliament met, of course, with strong opposition, first in the House of Commons and then in the House of Lords. Much of the opposition came, no doubt, from men of old-fashioned ways, who dreaded and hated any changes in any institutions to which they had been accustomed, and who held that even pauperism itself acquired a certain sanctity from the fact that it had been fostered and encouraged by the wisdom of so many succeeding generations. Some of the opposition, however, was inspired by feelings of a more purely sentimental, and therefore perhaps of a more respectable order. It was urged that the new system, if carried into law, would bear hardly on the deserving as well as the undeserving people; that the workhouse test would separate the husband from wife, and the father from the children; and, above all, that certain clauses of the new measure would leave the once innocent girl who had been led astray by some vile tempter to bear the whole legal responsibility as well as the public shame of her sin. It is not necessary for us now to go over at any length the long arguments which were brought up on both sides of the controversy. Many capable and high-minded observers were carried away by what may be called the sentimental side of the question, and forgot the enormous extent of the almost national corruption which the measure was striving to remove, in their repugnance to some of the evils which it did not indeed create, but which it failed to abolish. One weakness common to nearly all the arguments employed against the

measure came from the facility there was for putting out of sight altogether, during such a process of reasoning, the fact that the daily and hourly effect of the existing system was to force the deserving and hard-working poor to sink into that very pauperism which it was the object of all law-makers to diminish, or to abolish altogether. The wit of man could not devise any system of poor relief which should never go wrong in its application, should never bear harshly on men and women who deserved, and were striving for, an honest and independent subsistence.

The Bill, however, was passed in the House of Commons by a large majority. It was carried after a hard fight through the House of Lords, and received the royal assent in August, 1834. It should be said that the Duke of Wellington, although usually strong and resolute as a party man, had good sense and fair spirit enough to make him a warm supporter of the measure, despite the vehement protestations of many of his own habitual supporters. Since that time it seems to be admitted by common consent that the measure has accomplished all the beneficial results which its promoters anticipated from it, and has, in many of its provisions, worked even better than some of its supporters had expected. Of course, our poor-law system has since that time been always undergoing modifications of one kind or another, and public criticism is continually pointing to the necessity for further improvement. We hear every now and then of cases in which, owing to local maladministration, some deserving men and women, honestly struggling to keep their heads above pauperism, are left to perish of hunger or cold. We read well-authenticated, only too well-authenticated, instances of actual starvation taking place in some wealthy district of a great city. We hear of parochial funds squandered and muddled away; of the ratepayers' money wasted in extravagance, and worse than extravagance; of miserable courts and alleys where the deserving and undeserving poor are alike neglected and uncared for. But it would be utterly impossible that some such defects as these should not be found in the management of any system worked by

human mechanism for such a purpose as the relief of a great nation's poverty. The predominant fact is that we have a system which is based on the representative principle, which is open to the inspection and the criticism of the whole country, and which frankly declares itself the enemy of professional beggary and the helper of the poverty which is honestly striving to help itself. Much remains yet to be done for the improvement of our national system of poor relief, but it has, at least, to be said that the reformed Parliament did actually establish a system founded on just principles and responsible to public judgment.

Another of the great reforms which was accomplished in this age of reform found its occasion when the time came for the renewal of the East India Company's charter. The Government and the Houses of Parliament had to deal with the future administration of one of the greatest empires the world had ever seen, brought together by events and forces the like of which had not been at work in any previous chapter of the world's history. We have already traced, in this book, the growth of the East India Company's possessions, a growth brought about by a combination of the qualities which belonged to the Alexanders and the Cæsars, and of the qualities also which go to the expansion of peaceful commerce and the opening up of markets for purely industrial enterprise. The charter of the Company had been renewed by legislation at long intervals, and the first reformed Parliament now found itself compelled to settle the conditions under which the charter should be renewed for another period of twenty years. Mr. Molesworth justly remarks that "it was a fortunate circumstance that the Reform Bill had passed, and a Reform Parliament been elected, before the question of the renewal of the Company's charter was decided; for otherwise the directors of this great Company and other persons interested in the maintenance of the monopolies and abuses connected with it would in all probability have returned to Parliament, by means of rotten boroughs, a party of adherents sufficiently large to have effectually prevented the Government and the House of Commons from dealing with

this great question in the manner in which the interests of England and India alike demanded that it should be dealt with."

Up to the time at which we have now arrived the East India Company had an almost absolute monopoly of the whole Chinese trade, as well as the Indian trade, and a control over the administration of India such as might well have gratified the ambition of a despotic monarch. The last renewal of the Company's charter had been in 1813, and it was to run for twenty years, so that Lord Grey's Government found themselves charged with the task of making arrangements for its continuance, or its modifications, or its abolition. Some distinction had already been effected between the powers of the Company as the ruler of a vast Empire under the suzerainty of England, and its powers as a huge commercial corporation, or what we should now call a syndicate, but the company still retained its monopoly of the India and China trade. In the mean time, however, the principles of political economy had been asserting a growing influence over the public intelligence, and the question was coming to be asked, more and more earnestly, why a private company should be allowed the exclusive right of conducting the trade between England and India and China. An agitation against the monopoly began, as was but natural, among the great manufacturing and commercial towns in the North of England. Miss Martineau, in her "History of the Thirty Years' Peace," ascribes the beginning of this movement to a once well-known merchant and philanthropist of Liverpool, the late Mr. William Rathbone, whom some of us can still remember having known in our earlier years. Miss Martineau had probably good reasons for making such a statement, and, at all events, nothing is more likely than that such a movement began in Liverpool, and began with such a man. In London the directors and supporters of the East India Company were too powerful to give much chance to a hostile movement begun in the metropolis, and it needed the energy, the commercial independence, and the advanced opinions of the northern cities to give it an effective start.

When the time came for the renewal of the Company's charter, the Government had made up their mind that the renewal should be conditional on the abolition of the commercial monopoly, and that the trade between the dominions of King William and the Eastern populations should be thrown open to all the King's subjects. The measure passed through both Houses of Parliament with but little opposition. Mr. Molesworth is perfectly right in his remarks as to the different sort of reception which would have been given to such a measure if the charter had come up for renewal before the Act of Reform had abolished the nomination boroughs and the various other sham constituencies. But it is a striking proof of the hold which the representative principle and the doctrines of free-trade were already beginning to have on public opinion that the monopoly of the East India Company should not have been able to make a harder fight for its existence. The wonder which a modern reader will be likely to feel as he studies the subject now is, not that the monopoly should have been abolished with so little trouble, but that rational men should have admitted so long the possibility of any justification for its existence.

The renewal of the Charter of the Bank of England gave an opportunity, during the same session, for an alteration in the conditions under which the Bank maintains its legalized position and its relations with the State, and for a further reorganization of those conditions, which was in itself a distinct advance in the commercial arrangements of the Empire. Other modifications have taken place from time to time since those days, and it is enough to say here that the alterations made by the first reformed Parliament, at the impulse of Lord Grey and his colleagues, were in keeping with the movement of the commercial spirit and went along the path illumined by the growing light of a sound political economy.

CHAPTER LXXVII.

PEEL'S FORLORN HOPE.

Lord Grey was growing tired of the work of that Administration. It had been incessant work, and its great successes of later years had been checkered by some disappointments, which, although not deep-reaching, were irritating and disturbing. Some of his most capable colleagues had broken away from him, and he probably began to feel that the reformers all over the country expected more of him than he saw his way to accomplish. In 1834 he asked to be relieved from the duties of his office, and the King consented, probably with greater good-will than he had felt in acceding to some of Lord Grey's previous requests, and accordingly Lord Grey ceased to be Prime Minister. With his resignation of office Lord Grey passes out of this history and takes an abiding place in the Parliamentary history of his country. He can hardly be called a great statesman, for he had been mainly instrumental in bringing to success and putting into legislative form the ideas of greater men, but his must be regarded as a distinguished and noble figure among England's Parliamentary leaders. He was especially suited for the work which it was his proud fortune to accomplish at the zenith of his power, for no one could be better fitted than he for the task of discountenancing the wild alarms which were felt by so many belonging to what were called the privileged classes at the thought of any measures of reform which might disturb the existing order of things, and lead to red ruin and the breaking-up of laws. On Lord Grey's retirement he was succeeded as Prime Minister by Lord Melbourne, who had previously been Home Secretary. Lord Melbourne might have been thought just the sort of

person with whom King William could easily get on, because such a Prime Minister was not likely to vex his sovereign's unwilling ear by too many demands for rapid and far-reaching reform. Melbourne was a thoroughly easy, not to say lazy, man. He was certainly not wanting in intellect, he had some culture, he was a great reader of books and a great lover of books, and he was often only too glad to escape into literary talk and literary gossip from discussions on political questions and measures to be introduced into Parliament. He was fond of society, made himself generally agreeable to women, and was usually well acquainted with the passing scandals of high social life.

One might, indeed, have thought that such a man was just the minister in whom King William would find a congenial companion and adviser. But the truth was that the King had grown tired of the Whig statesmen, and had long been looking out for an opportunity to get rid of them on easy terms. Perhaps he did not quite like the idea of telling a man of Lord Grey's stately demeanor that he wished to dispense with his services and saw in Lord Melbourne a minister who could be approached on any subject without much sensation of awe. However that may be, the King soon found what seemed to him a satisfactory opportunity for ridding himself of the presence of his Whig advisers. Lord Althorp was suddenly raised to the House of Lords by the death of his father, Earl Spencer, and of course some rearrangement of the Ministry became necessary, as it would not be possible that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should have a ministerial place anywhere but in the House which has the levying of the taxes and the spending of the money. When Lord Melbourne came to advise with his sovereign on the subject the King informed him, in the most direct and off-hand manner, that he contemplated a much more complete rearrangement than Lord Melbourne had suggested, and, in fact, that he had made up his mind to get rid of the present Government altogether. Lord Melbourne, of course, bowed to the will of his master, and, indeed, was not the sort of man to take a

dismissal from office greatly to heart, believing it, no doubt, quite likely that some restoration to office might await him, and possibly feeling that life had some enjoyments left for him even though he were never again to be Prime Minister.

The King determined to send for Sir Robert Peel and intrust him with the task of forming an Administration. William had, as might naturally be expected of him, consulted in the first instance with the Duke of Wellington. Wellington, with the practical good sense which was a part of his character, had told the sovereign that at such a time it was futile to think of calling upon any one to become Prime Minister who had not a seat in the House of Commons. As the King was resolved to have a new Administration, Peel was obviously the man to be intrusted with the task of forming it, and therefore the King sent for him at once. But Peel was not in England; he had gone with his wife to Italy, and, as we know from his own published letters, he had not entered into any communication, even with the Duke of Wellington, as to the probable movements of political affairs in his absence, not supposing for a moment that any emergency could arise at home which might make it necessary for him to cut short his holiday and return to the working ground of Westminster. A special messenger had to be sent off at once to convey to Peel the wishes of his sovereign, and one has to stop and think over things a little before he can quite realize what it meant in those days, which seem so near our own, to send a special message from London to the heart of Italy. Peel was at Rome, and had just returned with his wife one night from a great ball given by a celebrated Italian Princess, when he received the letter which urged him to come back and become for the first time Prime Minister of England. Peel's mind was at once made up. That sense of duty which always guided his movements dictated his reply. There was for him no question of personal pride or ambition to be gratified, or of any graceful effort to affect the ways of one who modestly shrinks from a task beyond his power. He saw that his sovereign needed

his immediate services, and that was enough for him. He and his wife were just on the eve of what had promised to be a delightful visit to Naples, but the visit to Naples was put off without a second thought to the indefinite future, and the statesman and his wife set out at once on their journey to London. The preparations for such a journey at that time were such as might give pause even to an experienced explorer in our own easy-going and luxurious age. Sir Robert Peel, of course, had to travel by private carriage. He had to traverse more than one State in order to reach the sea at Calais. The roads were dangerous in many places, and Peel had to take some well-armed servants with him. He had to go well provided with the most elaborate official passports. He had even to obtain a special passport for himself, lest, in the event of his wife finding the constant travel too much for her, she might have to take rest at some town on the way, and Peel, if he attempted to continue his journey, might be stopped somewhere until he had satisfactorily accounted for the disappearance of the lady who was described in the original passports as his travelling companion and his wife. The journey was interrupted by unforeseen obstacles in several places. At one spot the rising of a river relentlessly barricaded the progress of the travellers for many hours. At another point a bridge was broken down. In France, Peel and his wife were brought to a stand at the city of Lyons because that city happened just then to be in a state of siege, and the travellers had to furnish satisfactory evidence that they were not emissaries of some revolutionary propaganda. It took twelve days to cover the distance from Rome to Dover, and, except for such delays as have just been mentioned, our travellers had gone on night and day without stopping. Even when they arrived at Dover, Peel took no thought about rest, but journeyed on all night until he reached London.

Peel himself tells us in his memoirs that the long travel had at least the advantage of giving him time enough to think out his course of action and the best way of serving his sovereign and his country. The journey, he says, al-

lowed him to do this coolly and without interruption. He certainly had time enough for the purpose, but it must have needed all Peel's strength of character to enable him to give his mind up to such considerations during a course so toilsome, so rugged, so dangerous, and often so rudely interrupted. He arrived in London at an early hour on the morning of December 9, 1834, and he set off at once to present himself to the King, by whom, it need hardly be said, he was very cordially welcomed. The welcome became all the more warm because he was willing to accept the important task which the King desired to intrust to him, and would enter without delay on the work of endeavoring to form a Ministry. Now, in order to do justice to Peel's patriotic purpose in undertaking this difficult task, we have to bear in mind that he did not personally approve of the King's action in breaking up the Melbourne Administration, or even of the manner in which it had been broken up. He knew well enough that the King had grown tired of the Whig Ministry, but he did not think the King's personal feelings were a complete justification for William's dismissal of a set of men whom he had consented to place in power. Peel did not regard the mere necessity for a rearrangement consequent on Lord Althorp's removal to the House of Lords as anything like a fitting excuse for the break-up of the whole Government. More than that, Peel had no confidence in the chances of a new Conservative Administration just then. It was not encouraging to a statesman about to form his first Cabinet to have to believe, as Peel did, that such a Government would be left very much at the mercy of the Opposition, and in more than one important or even impending question might at any time be outvoted in the House of Commons. None the less, however, was Peel resolved to stand by his sovereign, who appeared to be in a difficulty. The same sense of public duty, according to his conception of public duty, which guided him at every great crisis of his political career decided his action in this instance. He set himself to the work of forming an Administration in which he proposed to take under his own charge the functions of

Prime Minister and the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer. He knew that he could count on the support of the Duke of Wellington, and to Wellington he offered the post of Secretary for Foreign Affairs, which was at once accepted. Then he wrote to Sir James Graham and to Lord Stanley. Both refused. Sir James Graham, although he declined to accept office, promised Peel all the support he could give consistently with his own judgment and his own political views. Lord Stanley wrote a letter to Peel which has even still both historical and personal interest. Its historical interest consists in the clear exposition it contains of the various questions which then divided the two great parties in the State. Its personal interest is found in the fact that it shows Lord Stanley as the convinced reformer, who sees no possibility of his joining an Administration about to be created by a statesman whose whole career has been antagonistic to political reform. Those of us who remember the brilliant orator Lord Derby, by whom the office of Prime Minister was three times held, find it hard to think of him as anything but a steady-going Conservative at heart, and may be excused a shock of surprise when they are bidden to remember that in 1834 the same man, then Lord Stanley, declared that he could not serve under Peel because Peel was not reformer enough all round to secure his co-operation. Lord Stanley pointed out, in his letter, that between Peel and himself there had been a complete difference of opinion on almost every great public question except that which concerned the State Church, and he reminded Peel that so lately as on the occasion of Lord Grey's retirement from office the Duke of Wellington had seized the opportunity of publicly condemning the whole policy of the Whig Administration. Under these circumstances Lord Stanley declared that, in his opinion, it would be injurious to his own character and injurious to the new Government as well if he were to accept the offer of a place in such an Administration. He had left Lord Grey's Government because he differed with Lord Grey on one question alone, which then had to be dealt with, and he could not join a Government of which

Peel and Wellington were to be the leaders, from whom he had differed on almost every great political question that had engaged the attention of the country during his time.

Peel had nothing for it but to go on with his task and form the best Administration he could. Lord Lyndhurst was once again to be Lord Chancellor, and in such a man Peel certainly found a colleague who had no superior either as a lawyer or a debater in the House of Lords. Some of us who can still remember having heard Lord Lyndhurst deliver long and powerful speeches in the House of Lords, compelling the attention and the admiration of every listener when the orator himself had long left his eightieth year behind him, will feel sure that Sir Robert Peel's first Administration was adequately represented in the hereditary chamber. It is not necessary to introduce here a full list of the new Ministry, but there are three names which call for special mention. These are the names of three young men who then entered ministerial office for the first time, and with whom the world afterwards became well acquainted, each according to his different way. One was William Ewart Gladstone, who became Junior Lord of the Treasury, and whom the world has long since recognized as the greatest statesman and the greatest master of the House of Commons known to the reign of Queen Victoria. The second was Sidney Herbert, who was for many years one of the most ready, accomplished, and brilliant debaters in that House, and whose premature death cut short a career that had seemed to be steadily rising from day to day. The third was a man whose political life has long since been forgotten, but whose name is well remembered because of his success in quite a different field—Winthrop Mackworth Praed, the charming author of delightful verses, the founder of that English school of minstrelsy which sings for the drawing-room and the club-room, the feasts and the fashions, the joys and the well-ordered troubles of the West-End. Sidney Herbert and Praed were made joint Secretaries to the Board of Control, the department established by Pitt for directing the Government of India.

The new Prime Minister believed that it would be in every way more suitable to the convenience of the country that he and his colleagues should submit their political claims and purposes to the judgment of the constituencies by means of a general election. A dissolution accordingly took place, and Peel issued an address to the electors of Tamworth, which will always be regarded as an important political document. Although Peel had been an opponent of the principles embodied in the Reform Bill, no reformer in the country understood better than he did the impossibility, at such a time, of carrying on the work of the Government without a thorough understanding between the Ministry and the Parliament, between the Parliament and the public out-of-doors. No one knew better than Peel that the time had gone by, never to return, when an English minister could rule as an English minister even so lately as in the days of Pitt had done, merely by the approval and the support of a monarch without the approval and support of a majority of the electors. When, therefore, Peel prepared his address to his Tamworth constituents he knew perfectly well that his words were meant, not merely for the friendly ears of the little constituency, but for the consideration of the whole country. The same feeling actuated the great statesman during the entire course of his subsequent career, and the constituency of Tamworth had therefore the advantage of being favored from time to time with election addresses which form chapters of the highest interest and importance in the historical literature of the country. The address which he issued to his constituents before the general election in December, 1834, proclaimed, in fact, the opening of a new political era in England.

Peel made frank announcement that, so far as he and his friends were concerned, the controversy about Parliamentary reform had come to an end. By him and by them the decision of Parliament, which sanctioned the introduction of the Reform Bill of 1832, was accepted as a final settlement of the question. Peel declared that he regarded it as "a settlement which no friend to the peace

of the country would attempt to disturb, either by direct or by insidious means." Of course it was not to be understood that Peel had any intention of describing the Reform Act of 1832 as the last word of the Reformers' creed, and the close of all possible controversy with regard to the construction of the whole Parliamentary system. Peel no more meant to convey any idea of this kind than did Lord John Russell, when he used the word finality in connection with the Reform Act, mean to convey the idea that, according to his conviction, Parliament was never again to be invited to extend the electoral franchise or to modify the conditions under which the votes of the electors were to be given. The announcement which Peel made to the electors of Tamworth, and to the world in general, was that he and his friends recognized the establishment of the representative principle in English political life, accepted the new order of things as a result of a lawful decree, and separated themselves altogether from the antiquated Toryism which enshrined the old ideas of government as a religious faith, and revered the memory of the nomination boroughs, as the Jacobites revered the memory of the Stuarts. With the issue of Peel's Tamworth address in the December of 1834, the antique Tory, the Tory who made Toryism of the ante-reform days a creed and a cult, may be said to disappear altogether from the ranks of practical English politicians. The Tory of the old school appears, no doubt, here and there through all Parliamentary days down to our own time. We saw him in both Houses of Parliament as a heroic, unteachable opponent of Peel himself, of Bright and Cobden, of Gladstone, and sometimes even of Lord Derby and of Lord Salisbury, but he was merely a living protest against the succession of new ideas, and was no longer to be counted as a practical politician.

Sir Robert Peel soon saw that he had not gained much by his appeal to the constituencies. The results of the general election showed that the Conservatives had made a considerable addition to their numbers in the House of Commons, but showed also that they were still in a disheartening minority. The return of the first Reform Par-

liament had, indeed, exhibited them for the time as completely down in the dust, for there was a majority of more than three hundred against them, and now the Liberal majority was hardly more than one hundred. A very hopeful Conservative, or a Conservative who had a profound faith in the principles of antique Toryism, might fill himself with the fond belief that this increase in the Conservative vote foretold a gradual return to the good old days. But Peel was too practical a statesman to be touched for a moment by any such illusion. He had fully expected some increase in the Tory vote. He knew, as well as anybody could know, that there had been some disappointment among the more advanced and impatient reformers all over the country with the achievements of the first reformed Parliament, and, indeed, with the Act of Reform itself. After victory in a long-contested political battle there comes, almost as a matter of course, a season of relaxed effort among the ranks of the victors, for which allowance would have to be made in the mind of such a statesman as Peel, and, in this instance, allowance also had to be made for a falling off in the enthusiasm of those who had helped to carry the Reform movement to success, and found themselves in the end left out of all its direct advantages.

Peel saw at once that his Government must be absolutely at the mercy of the Opposition when any question arose on which it suited the purposes of the Opposition leaders to rally their whole forces around them and take a party division. So far as the ordinary business of the session was concerned, the Ministry might get on well enough, for there must have been a considerable amount of routine work which would not provoke the Opposition to a trial of strength; but if chance or hostile strategy should bring about at any moment a controversy which called for a strictly party division, then the Government must go down. Nothing can be more trying to a proud-spirited statesman in office than the knowledge that he can only maintain his Government, from day to day, because, for one reason or another, it does not suit the convenience of the Opposition to press some vote which must leave him and his colleagues

in a distinct minority. Peel had not long to wait before he found substantial evidence to justify his most gloomy forebodings.

The new Parliament met on February 19, 1835. The first trial of strength was on the election of a new Speaker. The former occupant of the office having been put forward for re-election, the Government were beaten by a majority of ten. Now this was a very damaging event for the ministers, and also an event somewhat unusual in the House of Commons. There is generally a sort of understanding, more or less distinctly expressed, that the candidate put forward by the Government for the office of Speaker is to be a man on whom both sides of the House can agree. It is obviously undesirable that there should be a party struggle over the appointment of the official who is assumed to hold an absolutely impartial position and is not supposed to be the mere favorite of either side of the House. In later years there has often been a distinct arrangement, or, at all events, a clear understanding, between the Government and the Opposition on this subject, and a candidate is not put forward unless there is good reason to assume that he will be acceptable to the two great political parties. In this instance no such understanding existed, or had been sought for. The Opposition set up a candidate of their own, and the nominee of the Government was defeated. There was, however, one condition in this defeat which, although it did not take away from the ominous character of the event, might, to a certain extent, have relieved Peel from the necessity of regarding it as an absolute party defeat. The majority had been obtained for the Opposition by the support of the Irish members who followed the leadership of Daniel O'Connell, and thus Sir Robert Peel saw himself outvoted by a combination of two parties, one of them regarded with peculiar disfavor by the majority of the English public on both sides of the political field. It was something for the followers of the Government to be able to say that their Liberal opponents had only been able to score a success by the help of the unpopular Irish vote, and it became, in fact, a new accusation against the

Liberals that they had traded on the favor of O'Connell and his Irish followers. From about this time the Irish vote has always played an important part in all the struggles of parties in the House of Commons; and it will be observed that the English Party, whether Liberal or Tory, against which that vote is directed is always ready with epithets of scorn and anger for the English Party for whom that vote has been given.

Several other humiliations awaited Peel as the session went on. Sometimes he was saved from defeat on a question of finance by the help of the more advanced Liberals, who came to his assistance when certain of his own Tory followers were prepared to desert him because his views on some question of taxation were much too new-fashioned for their own old-fashioned notions. Every one who has paid any attention to Parliamentary history can understand how distressing is the position of a minister who has no absolute majority at his command, and how more distressing still is the position of a minister who can only look to chance disruptions and combinations of parties for any possible majority. Peel bore himself throughout all the trials of that most trying time with indomitable courage and with unfailing skill. Never during his whole career did he prove himself more brilliant and more full of resource than as the leader of what might be called an utterly hopeless struggle. The highest tribute has been paid to his never-failing tact and temper during that trying ordeal by his principal opponent in the House of Commons, Lord John Russell. Russell was now the leader of the Liberal Opposition in the House of Commons, and the struggle of parties was once again illustrated by a sort of continuous Parliamentary duel between two rival leaders. The same phenomenon had been seen, from time to time, in the days of Queen Anne and in the days of the Georges, and it was seen again, at intervals, during some of the most vivid and fascinating passages of Parliamentary history in the reign of Queen Victoria.

The crisis, however, came soon to this first Ministry of Sir Robert Peel. Peel had announced, in a reasonable and

manful spirit, considering how the task of holding together a Ministry had been imposed on him and the temptation which it afforded for the attacks of irresponsible enemies, that he would not resign office on any side issue or question of purely factitious importance, and that he would hold his place unless defeated by a vote of want of confidence or a vote of censure. He challenged the leader of the Opposition to test the feeling of the House by a division on a question of that nature. Lord John Russell refused to take any such course, declaring that he believed it his duty to wait and see what might be the nature of the measures of reform which the Government had promised to introduce before inviting the House to say whether the Government deserved or did not deserve its confidence. Some of the measures announced by the Government had to do with the reform of the ecclesiastical courts and the maintenance of Church discipline, and Sir Robert Peel had himself given notice of a measure to deal with the Irish tithe system, the principal object of which was understood to be the transfer of the liability of the payment of tithes from the shoulders of the tenant to the shoulders of the landlord. It was not unreasonable that the Opposition should proclaim it their policy to wait and see what the Tory ministers really proposed to do before assailing them with a direct and general vote of want of confidence. Even, however, if the Opposition had been inclined to linger before inviting a real trial of strength, there was a feeling growing up all over the country which seemed impatient of mere episodical encounters leading to nothing in particular. The leaders of the Opposition had a very distinct policy in their minds, and on March 30, 1835, it found its formal expression.

Lord John Russell moved a resolution which called upon the House to resolve itself into a committee "in order to consider the present state of the Church established in Ireland, with the view of applying any surplus of revenues not required for the spiritual care of its members to the general education of all classes of the people without distinction of religious persuasion." Now here, it will be seen,

was the battle-ground distinctly marked out on which the two political parties must come, sooner or later, to a decisive struggle. About the collection of tithes, about the imposition of tithes, about the class of the community on whom the direct responsibility for the payment of tithes ought to fall, there might possibly be a basis of agreement found between Tories and Whigs. But when there arose a question as to the appropriation of the Church revenues, there the old doctrines and the new, the old Tories and the new Reformers, came into irreconcilable antagonism. The creed of the Tories was that the revenues of the Church belonged to the Church itself, and that if the Church had a surplus of funds here or there for any one particular purpose that surplus could be applied by it to some of its other purposes, but that no legislature had any right to say to the Church, "You have more money here than is needed for your own rights, and we have a right to take part of it away from you and apply it for the uses of the general public." The Government, therefore, accepted Lord John Russell's resolution as a distinct challenge to a trial of strength on an essential question of policy.

The debate which followed lasted through four days, and all the members of the House on both sides took part in it. The reports of that momentous debate may be read with the deepest interest even at this day, when some of the prophecies intended as terrible warnings by some of the Conservative orators have long since been verified as facts, and are calmly accepted by all parties as the inevitable results of rational legislation. Sir Robert Peel, Lord Stanley, Sir James Graham, and most others who spoke on the Ministerial side spoke with one voice, in warning the House of Commons that if it claimed a right to touch any of the revenues of the Irish State Church in order to appropriate them for the general education of the Irish people, the result must be that the time would come when the Irish Church itself would no longer be held sacred against the desecrating hand of the modern reformer, would be treated as no longer necessary to the welfare of the Irish people, and would be severed from the State and left upon a level

with the Roman Catholic Church and the various dissenting denominations.

One appeal which may be said to run through the whole of the speeches on the side of the Government is familiar to the readers and the audiences of all political debates, where any manner of Reform is under discussion. "You are asked"—so runs the argument—"to adopt this sort of policy in order to satisfy the demands of a certain class of the population; but how do you know, what guarantee can you give us, that when we have granted these demands they will be content and will not immediately begin to ask for more? We granted Catholic Emancipation in order to satisfy Ireland, and now is Ireland satisfied? It was only the other day we granted Catholic Emancipation, and now already Ireland declares, through her representatives, that she ought to have part of the revenues of the Irish State Church taken away from that Church and applied to the common uses of the Irish people. If she gets even that, will Ireland be contented? Will she not go on to demand repeal of the Union?" We turn with peculiar interest to the speech of a young Tory member which was listened to with great attention during the debate, and was believed to contain unmistakable promise of an important political career. So indeed it did, although the promise that career actually realized was not altogether of the kind which most of its audience were led to anticipate. It was the speech of Mr. William Ewart Gladstone. "The present motion," said Mr. Gladstone, "opens a boundless road—it will lead to measure after measure, to expedient after expedient, till we come to the recognition of the Roman Catholic religion as the national one. In principle, we propose to give up the Protestant Establishment. If so, why not abandon the political government of Ireland and concede the repeal of the legislative union." "There is no principle," he went on to say, "on which the Protestant Church can be permanently upheld, but that it is the Church which teaches the truth." That, he insisted, was the position which the House ought to maintain without allowing its decision to be affected by the mere asser-

tion, even if the assertion were capable of proof, that the revenues of the State Church in Ireland were entirely out of proportion to the spiritual needs of the Protestant population. Mr. Gladstone, however, had the mind of the financier even in those early days of his career, and he was at some pains to argue that the disproportion between the numbers of the Protestant and the Catholic populations in Ireland was not so great as Lord John Russell had asserted. He made out this part of his case ingeniously enough by including in the Protestant population in Ireland all the various members of the dissenting denominations, many or most of whom were as little likely to attend the administrations of the Established Church as the Roman Catholics themselves.

Gladstone's speech was thoroughly consistent in its opposition to Lord John Russell's resolution on the ground that that resolution, if pressed to its legitimate conclusion, assailed the whole principle on which the State Church in Ireland was founded. "I hope," he said, "I shall never live to see the day when such a system shall be adopted in this country, for the consequences of it to public men will be lamentable beyond all description. If those individuals who are called on to fulfil the high function of administering public affairs should be compelled to exclude from their consideration the elements of true religion, and to view various strange and conflicting doctrines in the same light, instead of administering those noble functions, they will become helots and slaves." The weakness of Mr. Gladstone's case was found in the fact that he insisted on regarding the State Church in Ireland as resting on precisely the same foundations as those which upheld the State Church in England. The truth was afterwards brought home to him that every argument which could be fairly used to justify the maintenance of the State Church in England was but another argument for the abolition of the State Church in Ireland—a work which it became at last his duty to accomplish. "I shall content myself," said Daniel O'Connell in his speech in the debate, "with laying down the broad principle that the

emoluments of a Church ought not to be raised from a people who do not belong to it. Ireland does not ask for a Catholic Establishment. The Irish desire political equality in every respect, except that they would not accept a single shilling for their Church."

Sir Robert Peel made a speech which was at once very powerful and very plausible. It was not, perhaps, pitched in a very exalted key, but it was full of argument, at once subtle and telling. He challenged the accuracy of Lord John Russell's figures, and declaimed against the injustice of inviting the House to pass a resolution founded on statistics which it had as yet no possible opportunity of verifying or even of examining. He pointed out that the Government had already given notice of their intention to bring in measures to deal with the very question concerned in Lord John Russell's resolution; and he asked what sincerity there could be in the purposes of men who professed a desire to amend as quickly as possible the tithe system in Ireland, and who yet were eager to deprive the Government of any chance of bringing forward the measures which they had prepared in order to accomplish that very object. The main argument of the speech was directed not so much against the policy embodied in the resolution of Lord John Russell, as against the manner in which it was proposed to carry out that policy. Sir Robert Peel declared that the object of the Opposition was not to effect any improvement in the relations of the State Church of Ireland and the people of Ireland, but simply and solely to turn out the Government. Why not, he asked, come to the point boldly and at once? Why not bring forward a vote of censure on the Government, or a vote of want of confidence in the Government, and thus compel them, if defeated, to go out of office, instead of endeavoring to enforce on them the adoption of a resolution dealing with questions which the Government had already promised to make the subject of legislation, and without waiting to hear what manner of legislation they were prepared to introduce?

There was an eloquent defiance in the closing words of Peel's speech. The great minister knew that defeat was

awaiting him, and he showed himself resolved to meet it half way. At three o'clock on the morning of April 3 the division on the resolution of Lord John Russell took place. There were 322 votes for the resolution and 289 against it. The resolution was therefore carried by a majority of 33. The student of history will observe with interest that the abolition of the Irish State Church was the result of a series of resolutions carried by Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons in 1868, and afterwards embodied in an act of legislation.

The debate on Lord John Russell's resolution was carried on for a few days longer, but it was chiefly concerned with mere questions as to the form in which the Ministry were called upon to give effect to the wish of the majority, and submit the resolution to the King. There was no heart or practical purpose in these debates, for everybody already knew what the end must be. On April 8 Sir Robert Peel announced to the House that he could not take any part in giving effect to the resolution, and that, therefore, he and his colleagues had determined on resigning their offices. The course taken by Peel was thoroughly honest, consistent, and upright, and Lord John Russell bore prompt and willing testimony to the constitutional propriety of the retiring Prime Minister's resolve. The Peel Ministry had come to its end. The country had been put to the trouble and expense of a general election, valuable time had been wasted, legislative preparations had been thrown away, and everything was now back again in just the same condition as when the King made up his mind to dismiss the Melbourne Administration. The whole blame for the muddle rested on the King, who now found himself compelled to take up again with Lord Melbourne just as if nothing had happened. The King, indeed, made an attempt to induce Lord Grey to come out of his retirement and form another Ministry; but Lord Grey was not to be prevailed upon to accept such an invitation, and William had to gulp down his personal objections and invite Lord Melbourne to come back once more and take charge of the Government of the country.

Lord Melbourne had no difficulty in forming an Administration, and it was on the whole very much the same in its composition as that which King William had so rudely dismissed only a few months before. But there were some new names in the list, and there was one very remarkable omission. Lord Brougham was not one of the members of the new Government. Lord Melbourne had made up his mind that if, perhaps, there could be no living without such a colleague, there certainly could be no living with him, and he preferred the chance to the certainty. The greatest sensation was produced all over the country when it was found that Lord Brougham was to have nothing to do with the new Administration. In and out of Parliament the question became a subject of keen and vehement discussion. The energy and the eloquence of Brougham had held a commanding place among the forces by which Parliamentary reform had been effected, and the wonder was how any Reform Ministry could venture to carry on the work of government, not merely without the co-operation of such a man, but with every likelihood of his active and bitter hostility. At one time the report went abroad, and found many ready believers, that there were periods in Brougham's life when his great intellect became clouded, as Chatham's had been at one time, and that the Liberal Ministry found it therefore impossible to avail themselves of his fitful services. Lord Melbourne himself once made an emphatic appeal to his audience in the House of Lords, after Lord Brougham had delivered a speech there of characteristic power and eloquence. Melbourne invited the House to consider calmly how overmastering must have been the reasons which compelled any body of rational statesmen to deprive themselves of such a man's co-operation. It would appear, however, that the reasons which influenced Melbourne and his colleagues were given by Brougham's own passionate and ungovernable temper, his impatience of all discipline, his sudden changes of mood and purpose, his overmastering egotism, and his frequent impulse to strike out for himself and to disregard all considerations of convenience or compromise, all calcula-

tions as to the effect of an individual movement on the policy of an Administration.

From that time Brougham had nothing more to do with ministerial work. He became merely an independent, a very independent, member of the House of Lords. To the close of his long career he was a commanding figure in the House and in the country, but it was an individual figure, an eccentric figure, whose movements must always excite interest, must often excite admiration, but from whom guidance and inspiration were never to be expected. Even on some of the great questions with which the brightest part of his career had been especially associated he often failed to exercise the influence which might have been expected from a man of such gifts and such achievements. Through the remainder of his life he could always arouse the attention of the country, and indeed of the civilized world, when he so willed, but his work as a political leader was done.

The office of Lord Chancellor was left for a while vacant, or, to describe the fact in more technical language, was put into commission. The commission was made up of the Master of the Rolls, the Vice-Chancellor, and one of the Judges. After a time Lord Cottenham was made Lord Chancellor. Lord John Russell became Home Secretary, and Lord Palmerston was Foreign Secretary. Among the new names on the list of the Administration was that of Sir Henry Parnell, who became Paymaster-General and Paymaster of the Navy, and that of Sir George Grey, who was Under-Secretary of the Colonies, and afterwards rose to hold high office in many a Government, and had at one time the somewhat undesirable reputation of being the rapidest speaker in the House of Commons.

King William must have put a strong constraint upon himself when he found that he had to receive, on terms at least of civility, so many of the men, as ministers, whom he had abruptly dismissed from his service not long before. For a considerable time he put up with them rather than received them, and maintained a merely official relationship with them so far even as not to invite them to dinner.

After a time, however, his Majesty somewhat softened in temper; the relations between him and his advisers became less strained; and he even went so far as to invite the members of the Cabinet to dinner, and expressed in his invitation the characteristic wish that each guest would drink at least two bottles of wine. When the construction of the new Ministry had been completed, Parliament re-assembled on April 18; but that meeting was little more than of formal character, as the Houses had again to adjourn in order to enable the new members who were members of the House of Commons to resign and seek, according to constitutional usage, for re-election at the hands of their constituents. The only public interest attaching to the meeting of Parliament on April 18 was found in an attempt, made by two Tory peers, to extract from Lord Melbourne some public explanation as to his dealings with O'Connell and the Irish party. Lord Melbourne was quite equal to the occasion, and nothing could be drawn from him further than the declaration that he had entered into no arrangements whatever with O'Connell; that if the Irish members should, on any occasion, give him their support, he should be happy to receive it, but that he had not taken and did not mean to take any steps to secure it. The incident is worth noting because it serves to illustrate, once again, the effect of the new condition which had been introduced into the struggles of the two great political parties by the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act, and the consequent admission of Irish Catholic members into the House of Commons.

Some of the members of the new Administration were not successful when they made their appeal to their old constituencies. Lord John Russell, for instance, was beaten in South Devonshire by a Tory antagonist, and a vacancy had to be made for him in the little borough of Stroud, the representative of which withdrew in order to oblige the leaders of his party, and obtained, in return for his act of self-sacrifice, an office under Government. Lord Palmerston was placed in a difficulty of the same kind, and a vacancy was made for him in the borough of

Tiverton by the good-nature and the public spirit of its sitting representative, and from that time to the end of his long career Lord Palmerston continued to be the member for Tiverton, which indeed won, by that fact alone, a conspicuous place in Parliamentary history. There were other disturbances of the same kind in the relations of the members of the new Government and their former constituents, and it was clear enough that a certain reaction was still working against the political impulse which had carried the Reform measures to success. Still, it was clear that the new Government had come into power as a Government of reformers, and Lord Melbourne found himself compelled to go on with the work of reform. Nothing could be less in keeping with his habits and the inclinations of his easy-going nature. It used to be said of him that whenever he was urged to set about any work of the kind his instinctive impulse always was to meet the suggestion with the question: "Why can't you let it alone?" Now, however, he had in his Cabinet some men, like Lord John Russell, whose earnestness in the cause of Reform was genuine and unconquerable; and if Lord Melbourne was too indolent to press forward reforms on his own account, he was also too indolent to resist such a pressure when put on him by others.

There was one great pressing and obvious reform which remained to be accomplished and ought naturally to follow on the reorganization of the Parliamentary system. That was the reorganization of the municipal system. The municipal work of the country, the management of all the various and complicated relations which concerned the local affairs of the whole community, had become a mere chaos of anomalies, anachronisms, and, in too many instances, of reckless mismanagement and downright corruption. If the sort of so-called representation which prevailed in the Parliamentary constituencies was, up to 1832, an absurdity and a fraud, it was not perhaps on the whole quite so absurd or altogether so fraudulent as that which set itself up for a representative system in the arrangements of the municipal corporations. As in the case of the

Parliamentary system, so in the case of the municipal system, the organization had begun with an intelligible principle to guide it; but, during the lapse of years and even of centuries, the original purpose had been swamped by the gradual and always increasing growth of confusion and corruption. The municipal arrangements of England had begun as a practical protest against the feudal system. While the feudal laws or customs still prevailed, the greater proportion of the working-classes were really little better than serfs at the absolute control of their feudal lords and masters. The comparatively small proportion of men who formed the trading class of the community found themselves compelled to devise some kind of arrangement for the security of themselves, their traffic, and their property against the dominion of the ruling class. It was practically impossible that a mere serf could devote his energies to a craft or trade with any hope of independence for himself or any chance of contributing to the prosperity of his working and trading neighbors. The trading, manufacturing, and commercial classes in each locality began to form themselves into groups, or what might be called guilds, of their own, with the object of common protection, in order to secure an opening for their traffic and their industry, and for the preservation of the earnings and the profits which came of their skill and energy. These trading groups asserted for themselves their right to free action in all that regarded the regulation of their work and the secure disposal of their profits, and thus they became what might be called governing bodies in each separate locality. One common principle of these governing bodies was that no one should be allowed to become a craftsman or trader in any district if he were a serf, and they claimed, and gradually came to maintain, the right to invest others with the title and privileges of freemen. This right of freemanship soon became hereditary, and the male children of a freeman were to be freemen themselves. In many communities the man who married a freeman's daughter acquired, if he had not been free before, the right of freemanship. No qualification of residence was necessary to

enable a man thus to become free. The self-organized community, whatever it might be, had the right of creating any stranger a freeman according as it thought fit.

We find this ancient system still in harmless and graceful illustration when a public man who has distinguished himself in the service of the country is honored by admission to the freedom of some ancient city. But in the far-off days, when the system was in practical operation, the unlimited right of creating freemen came to mean that in many cities, towns, and localities of all descriptions a number of outsiders who had no connection by residence, property, or local interest of any kind with the district, and who were wholly irresponsible to the public opinion of the local community, had the right to interfere in the management of its affairs and to become members of its municipal body. For the local traders soon began to form themselves into councils or committees for the management of the local affairs, and, in fact, became what might be described as self-elected municipal corporations; trustees who had assumed the trust for themselves; local law-makers whose term of office was lifelong, and against whose decision there was no available court of appeal. In some cases these local bodies actually arrogated to themselves the right of passing penal laws, and trying cases and awarding punishments. The local municipalities sometimes exercised the power of appointing Recorders to preside over their courts of law, and it happened in many instances that the municipal body made no condition as to the Recorder being a member of any branch of the legal profession. It is hardly necessary to point out some of the inevitable consequences of such a system. The municipal bodies voted what salaries they pleased out of the local funds, and named according to their pleasure the persons to receive the salaries. They disposed of the corporate revenues in any way they thought fit—and, indeed, in many cases they claimed and annexed as corporate property possessions that had always, up to the time of the annexation, been supposed to belong to the public at large. They usurped for themselves all manner of privileges and so-

called rights, and, if they thought fit, offered them for purchase to the highest bidder. The whole governing body often consisted of a very small number of residents who had elected themselves to office, and as they had the power of making themselves very disagreeable to disputants they did not often find individuals public spirited enough to challenge their right of local control. It happened much more frequently that if any man were strong enough to make his opposition inconvenient or uncomfortable for the local rulers, they got over the trouble by prevailing on him to become one of themselves, to share their privileges and profits, and to strengthen their authority. A local magnate, the head of some great family, a peer of old descent, was often thus "nobbled"—to use a modern colloquialism—and was allowed to make as many freemen as he pleased and to take whatever part he would in the control of municipal affairs.

It would be superfluous to say that the municipalities became a constantly working instrument in the hands of this or that political party. Wherever the Whigs or the Tories were strong, there the constituencies, such as they were, could always be placed at the absolute disposal of some local magnate. Even in the districts where there was but little actual corruption there was often the most extravagant waste of the public funds and public property, and the most utter neglect of all the ordinary ways of business and of economy. For a long time the increasing evils of the system had been attracting the attention and arousing the alarm of enlightened and public-spirited men all over the country, and of course when the great measure of reform had dealt with the political system, it was obvious that the reforming hand must before long touch the municipal system as well. Shortly after the passing of the Reform Bill Lord Althorp had appointed a commission to inquire into the whole history, growth, and working of the municipal corporations, and the report had brought out an immense amount of systematized information on which the Liberal statesmen, now once again in office, were determined to act. Lord Melbourne intrusted the task of pre-

paring and conducting through the House of Commons a measure for this purpose to the capable hands of Lord John Russell, who was now the leader of the Government in that House. Lord John Russell's measure was, in fact, the foundation of the whole municipal system which we see spread over the country in our times. It proposed to begin by abolishing altogether the freeman system and placing the election of local governing bodies in the hands of residents who paid a certain amount of taxation. In fact, it made the municipal bodies representative in just the same sense as the Parliamentary constituencies had been made representative by the Reform Act. It remodelled altogether the local law courts and legal arrangements of the municipalities, and ordered that the appointment of Recorders should be in the hands of the Crown, that each Recorder was to be a barrister of a certain standing, and that a Recorder should be nominated for every borough which undertook to provide a suitable salary for the occupant of the office. Provision was also made for the proper management of charitable trusts and funds.

The measure was to apply to 183 boroughs, not including the metropolis, with an average of 11,000 persons to each borough. Some of the larger boroughs were to be divided into wards, and in most cases the intention of the measure was that the boundaries of the Parliamentary borough should be the boundaries of the municipal borough as well. The governing body of each municipality was to consist of a Mayor and Councillors, the Councillors to be elected by resident ratepayers. It was proposed that the rights of living freemen were to be maintained, but as each life lapsed the right was to be extinguished, and thus the whole freeman system was to die out and all exclusive trading privileges were to be abolished. The Bill, as introduced by Lord John Russell, only applied to England and Wales; but O'Connell demanded that Ireland should also be included in the reform, and it was finally agreed that a Bill of the same nature should be brought in for Ireland, and that arrangements should be made with the Scottish representatives to have the provisions of the meas-

ure applied also to Scotland so far as might be consistent with the usages and the desire of the Scottish people.

Sir Robert Peel did not offer any direct opposition to the measure, although he criticised it severely enough in some of its provisions. His speech, however, was distinctly a declaration in favor of some comprehensive scheme of municipal reform, and might fairly have been regarded rather as a help than as a hinderance to the purposes of the Government. The example set by Sir Robert Peel had naturally much influence over the greater number of the Conservative party, and only some very old-fashioned Conservatives seemed inclined to make a stand against the measure. Mr. Grote seized the opportunity to introduce a motion for the adoption of the ballot in municipal elections, but it is hardly necessary to say that he did not secure support enough on either side of the House to win success for his proposition. The Bill passed through the House of Commons without any important change in its character, but it met with very serious maltreatment in the House of Lords. The majority of the peers did not see their way to compass the actual rejection of the Bill, especially after the liberal and statesmanlike spirit in which Sir Robert Peel had dealt with it; but they set themselves to work with the object of rendering it as nearly useless as they could for the purposes which its promoters had in view. Lord Lyndhurst led the opposition to the Bill, and he could, when he so pleased, become the very narrowest of Tories, while he had ability and plausibility not included in the intellectual stock of any other Tory then in the House of Lords. Under this leadership the Tory peers so disfigured and mangled the Bill that before long its own authors could hardly have recognized it as the work of their hands. The peers not only restored all, or nearly all, the abuses and anomalies which the measure as it left the House of Commons had marked for utter abolition, but they even went so far as to introduce into their version of the Bill some entirely new and original suggestions for the creation of abuses up to that time unknown to the existing municipal system.

The Bill thus diversified had, of course, to go back to the House of Commons, and it is hardly necessary to say that the House of Commons could not, as the Parliamentary phrase goes, agree with the Lords' amendments. Peel once again took a statesmanlike course, and strongly advised the House of Lords not to press their absurd and objectionable alterations. In the House of Lords itself the Duke of Wellington, acting as he almost always did under the influence of Peel, recommended the Tory peers not to carry their opposition too far, and before long Lord Lyndhurst, who was by temperament and intellect a very shrewd and practical man, with little of the visionary or the fanatic about him, thought it well to accept Wellington's advice, and to urge its acceptance on his brother Conservatives. Lord John Russell recommended the House of Commons to accept a compromise on a few insignificant details in no wise affecting the general purposes of the measure, in order to soothe the wounded feelings of the peers and enable them to yield with the comforting belief that after all their resistance had not been wholly in vain. The struggle was over, and on September 7, 1835, the measure became law in the same shape, to all practical purposes, as that which it wore when it left the House of Commons after its third reading there, and thus secured for Great Britain and Ireland the system of municipal government which has been working to this day.

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

STILL THE REIGN OF REFORM.

THE movement for the diffusion of education among the people had been making steady progress during the reign of William the Fourth, and some of the most distinct and lasting memorials of that movement have come to be associated with the history of the reign. One of these was the granting of a charter for the establishment of a great university which was to bear the name of the capital, and was to confer its degrees, its honors, and its offices without any conditions as to the religious profession of those whom it educated, and whom it taught and qualified by appointment to conduct the education of others. The old Universities of Oxford and Cambridge were then directly associated with the State Church, and only gave the stamp of their approval and the right to teach to those who professed the religion established by law. There had been growing up, for some time, a feeling in the community that there was need for a system of university teaching which should be open alike to the members of all creeds and denominations, and even to those who did not profess to subscribe to the doctrines of any particular creed, or to enroll themselves in the ranks of any particular denomination. The institutions which are now known as University College, London, and the University of London are among the most remarkable growths of this movement. After years of effort the charters for these institutions were granted by King William in 1836, and it is needless to say that University College has played a great part in the spreading of education among the middle and poorer classes throughout the country. Henry Brougham was one of the most active promoters of the effort to bring the higher education and

its honors within the reach of all classes and creeds, and his name will always be distinctly associated with the rapid progress made in the spread of knowledge during the earlier part of the nineteenth century. Brougham was one of the founders and promoters of the "Penny Cyclopædia for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge," which delighted some of our grandfathers, amazed and bewildered others, and filled yet others with a holy horror at the daring effort to upset all the wholesome distinctions of ranks and classes by cramming the lower orders with an amount of knowledge wholly unsuited to their subordinate condition, and unfitting them for the proper discharge of the duties associated with that station in life to which it had pleased Providence to call them.

Brougham also took a leading part in the founding of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, which was established by Sir David Brewster, Sir Roderick Murchison, and many other men famous in science and in letters in 1831. It has been holding its annual meetings in all the great cities and towns of these islands ever since, and is not likely to be interrupted in the continuance of its work. The British Association was the subject of a good deal of cheap ridicule in its early days, and caricaturists, most of them long since forgotten, delighted in humorous illustrations of the oddities by which social life was to be profusely diversified when science was taught at popular meetings, and not merely men, but even women and young women, could sit in the public hall and listen to great professors discoursing on the construction of the earth and the laws which regulate the movements of the heavenly bodies. The present generation has almost completely forgotten even the fact that the British Association was once a familiar and favorite subject for the pen and pencil of satirists. "The schoolmaster is abroad" was an expression used by Brougham to illustrate the educational movement which was going on in his time, and which he did as much as any man could have done to set and to keep in motion. King William himself, we may be sure, took only a very moderate interest in all these goings

on, but, at all events, he did not stand in the way of the general educational movement; and indeed he gave it a kindly word of patronage and encouragement whenever it seemed a part of his State functions to sanction the progress of science by his royal recognition.

Among the many reforms accomplished in this reign of reform was that which effected the practical abolition of the system of impressment for the Navy, that system which had so long worked its purposes through the action of what was familiarly known as the press-gang. The press-gang system had been in force from very remote days indeed, for it is shown by statute and by record to have been in operation before 1378. In 1641 the practice was declared illegal by Parliament; but Parliament might just as well not have troubled itself upon the subject, for the impressment of seamen went on just as if nothing had happened. Whenever seamen were required to man the royal fleet in time of war, the press-gang instantly came into operation. Its mode of action was simple and straightforward, and consisted of the forcible arrest and complete capture of merchant seamen and fishermen, or stalwart young men of any kind, in seaport towns, who looked as if they had seen service on some kind of sailing craft. The ordinary practice was that an officer and a party of seamen and marines landed from some ships of war in the harbor, and seized and carried off any number of men who seemed to them suitable for their purpose, and dragged them as prisoners on board war vessels, where they were compelled to serve until such time as their help might be no longer needed.

The literature of England, almost down to our own times, is diversified here and there by illustrations of the scenes which were created in our seaport towns by this practice. Smollett has more than one animated picture of this kind. The sea stories of Captain Marryat's days abound in such illustrations, and even romance of the higher order, and poetry itself, have found subjects for picturesque and pathetic narrative in the stories of young men thus torn from their families without a moment's

notice, and compelled to go on a ship of war and fight the foreign enemy at sea. The pay of an able seaman in a ship of war was, in those times, very poor; the life was one of hardship, and there was little to tempt a young man of ordinary ways and temperament to enter the naval service of his sovereign. The seaport towns and the towns on the great rivers were called upon by royal authority to supply a certain proportionate number of men for service in the Navy, and the local governing bodies did their best, we may be sure, by the offer of bounties and other encouragements, to induce young men to volunteer for the sea. In times of war, however, when sudden demands were made on the part of the Crown for the efficient manning of the Navy, these encouragements and temptations often failed to procure anything like the required amount of voluntary service, and then it was that the press-gang came into work to meet the demand by force.

During the long wars which followed the outbreak of the French Revolution the press-gang had a busy time of it. Vessels of war were in the constant habit of summoning merchant vessels to hand over a certain number of their seamen, and the merchant vessels were brought to just as if they had been the cruisers of the enemy, and were boarded by force, whenever force seemed necessary, and compelled to supply the requisite number. It sometimes happened that the captain of a vessel failed to understand the meaning of the peremptory summons issued to him, and he was then promptly brought to an understanding of the situation by the shot of the war vessel and the appearance of an armed boarding party on his own decks. Nor was it even a very unusual event for the captain of the merchant vessel to offer a resistance, and then there was a regular sea-fight between the British war ship and the British merchantman, in which, of course, the latter was very soon compelled to acknowledge the validity of the royal warrant.

In the ordinary course of things, however, the captain of the war vessel sent an officer and a party of men on shore, and their business was to make any captures they

pleased in that part of the town where men fit for service at sea were most likely to be found. There are stories told, and told on historic evidence as truth, about young husbands thus captured and thrown into prison to await their removal to some war vessel off the coast, and whose wives or mothers could devise no better means for their rescue than to obtain an interview with them in the prison, and there contrive so to mutilate the hands of the captives through the bars of the cell as to render them unfit for service in the Royal Navy. Sometimes, when it became known that the press-gang was about to visit that part of the town where seafaring men were likely to be found, the population of the quarter rallied in defence of their townsmen, and offered just such resistance to the emissaries of the naval authorities as they would have offered to an invading enemy. Streets were barricaded; from the high windows of houses stones were hurled down and volleys of musketry were fired; crowds of armed men, and even sometimes of armed women, met the invaders in the street itself and disputed their progress inch by inch.

In the lower quarters of Portsmouth and other seaport towns such scenes were of frequent occurrence. The whole system had among its other harmful effects a very damaging influence on the Navy itself and on its discipline. The press-gang was not very choice in making up its contributions of recruits for the fleet. No great pains were taken with a view to obtain certificates as to character and conduct. Those who formed the recruiting expedition were only too ready to seize any strapping young men whom they found loitering about the streets and lanes of the lower quarters in a seaport town. These strapping young men often turned out to be rising young men of the criminal classes, but their limbs and muscles made them like some of Falstaff's recruits, "good enough to toss—food for powder," and they were promptly swooped upon and carried off to serve in his Majesty's Navy. Such captives as these, when put on board a vessel of war and compelled to serve as seamen there, had the influence which might have been expected from them over the habits of the whole crew.

The severest and even the most savage methods of discipline were often found necessary to force such men into habits of obedience and into anything like decent conduct. Flogging then, and for long after, prevailed in the Navy and in the Army, and one of the most familiar arguments in favor of keeping up that form of discipline was found in the fact that in many cases the new recruits might have corrupted the habits of a whole ship's company if they had not been compelled by frequent floggings to obey orders, submit themselves to rules, and conduct themselves with decency.

For a long time a strong feeling had been growing up among philanthropists and reformers of all kinds against the practice of impressment and against the discipline of the "cat," as the flogging instrument was commonly termed. The philanthropists and the reformers generally were met by the old sort of familiar argument. They were told that it would be utterly impossible to man a navy if the press-gang were to be abolished, and equally impossible to keep the Navy up to its work and in decent condition if seamen were no longer liable to the punishment of the lash. The innovators were asked whether they knew better how to raise and maintain an efficient Navy than did the naval authorities, on whose shoulders rested the responsibility of defending the shores of England from foreign invasion. Those who made themselves conspicuous by their advocacy of what were then beginning to be called humanitarian principles were roundly accused of want of patriotism, and it was often suggested that they were anti-English in their sentiments and their instincts, and were persons who would probably, on the whole, rather welcome the foreign invader than lend a hand to drive him back. The spirit of humanity and of reform was in the air, however, and in the reformed Parliament there were many men who had as good a gift of eloquence as the best of their opponents, and who could not be frightened out of any purpose on which they had set their minds and hearts. In 1835 the Government of Lord Melbourne brought in a measure for the abolition of the press-gang

system and for limitation of compulsory service in the Navy to a period of five years. This measure not only had its own direct and immediate beneficial effects, but it also did much to prepare the way for the abolition of flogging. Many years, indeed, had to pass before this latter reform could be accomplished, but it was clear that, when the manning of the Navy no longer brought with it its captures from the criminal classes, the time was coming for the gradual adoption of a system of discipline more in accordance with the principles of humanity and the character of a noble service. As we have seen in all previous experiences of reform, the forebodings of the anti-reformers proved to be utterly false alarms in regard to the manning and the discipline of the Navy. We have seen some foreign wars since the days of William the Fourth, and we have heard alarms of foreign invasion again and again. But the Navy, under its improved conditions, has never been in want of volunteers to man it, and the greatest lovers of peace have always proclaimed it to be the surest and best defence of the country. There were many leading men in the House of Commons since those days who persistently demanded a reduction in the Army on the very ground that England could safely defy any foreign foe so long as she had the bulwark of such a Navy.

One great, solid, and picturesque memorial is destined to associate the reign of William the Fourth with the history of English architecture. We speak of the Houses of Parliament which stand on the banks of the river, and thus have the Thames on one side and Westminster Abbey on the other. The great range of halls, towers, and terraces, arches, squares, and court-yards, which, until comparatively recent days, were often described in common phrase as the New Houses of Parliament, owe their origin and their plan, although not their complete construction, to the reign of William the Fourth. On the evening of October 16, 1834, the old buildings in which the Lords and the Commons used to assemble were completely destroyed by fire. The fire broke out so suddenly on that evening and spread with such extraordinary rapidity that many of those

who were engaged in occupations of one kind or another in various parts of the buildings had much difficulty in escaping with their lives. The flames spread so fast that in an almost incredibly short space of time the two Houses of Parliament, and almost all the offices, residences, and other buildings attached to them, were seen to be devoted to hopeless ruin. For a while it seemed almost certain that Westminster Hall itself must be involved in the common destruction, and even the noble Abbey, with its priceless memorial treasures, appeared destined to become a mere ruin of shattered stones. The arrangements for the extinguishing of fires were rude and poor and inefficient in those days when compared with the systematized service which is employed in our own, and for a considerable time those who hurried to the spot, charged with the duty of combating the conflagration, appeared to do little better than get in each other's way and only give new chances to each fresh eruption. The tide in the river was very low, too, when the destroying work began, and it was hard indeed to bring any great body of water to bear upon the flames. As the tide rose, however, it became easy to make more effective efforts. At last it was found that Westminster Abbey might be considered perfectly safe. So was Westminster Hall, that noble historical enclosure, the Hall which saw the trial of William Wallace, of Charles the First, of Somers, and of Warren Hastings, the hall which celebrated the coronation of so many kings, which boasts of being the oldest chamber in Europe held in continuous occupation up to the present day, the largest hall in Europe unsupported by pillars. It was preserved, to be the grand entrance and vestibule to both the Houses of Parliament. But the chambers in which, up to that day, the Lords and Commons had conducted their legislative work were utterly destroyed.

At first it was assumed, as is almost always the assumption in the case of any great conflagration, that the work of destruction had been the outcome of an incendiary plot, and for a while a wild idea spread abroad that some modern Guy Fawkes had succeeded where his predecessor had com-

pletely failed. But it was soon made clear and certain that the whole calamity, if indeed it can be called much of a calamity, had been the result of a mere accident. A careless workman, aspiring to nothing more than a quick release from his labor, and not destined to the fame of the aspiring youth who fired the Ephesian dome, had brought about the ruin which bequeathed to England and to the world the vast and noble structure of Westminster Palace. The workman was engaged in burning up a number of the old, disused wooden tallies which once used to be employed in the Court of Exchequer, and he heaped too large a bundle of them on the fire. At an unlucky moment a flame suddenly blazed up which caught hold of the furniture in the room, and in another moment set the whole building on fire, and then created the vast conflagration which wrought so much destruction.

We have expressed a certain doubt as to whether the burning of the old Houses of Parliament is really to be regarded as a national calamity, and the doubt is founded partly on the admitted fact that the chambers which existed before the fire were quite unequal in size and in accommodation to the purposes for which they were designed, and partly on the architectural magnificence of the buildings which succeeded them. The Lords and Commons found accommodation where they could while preparations were in progress for the building of new and better chambers, and a Parliamentary committee was soon appointed to consider and report upon the best means of providing the country with more commodious and more stately Houses of Parliament. The committee ventured on a recommendation which was considered, at the time, a most daring piece of advice. The recommendation was that the contract for the erection of the new Houses of Parliament should be thrown absolutely open to public competition. Nothing like that proposal had ever been heard of under similar conditions in English affairs up to that time. What seemed to most persons the most natural and proper plan—the seemly, becoming, and orderly plan—would have been to allow the sovereign or some great State

personage to select the Court architect who might be thought most fitting to be intrusted with so great a task, and let him work out, as best he could, the pleasure of his illustrious patron. The committee, however, were able to carry their point, and the contract for the great work was thrown open to unrestricted competition. Out of a vast number of designs submitted for approval, the committee selected the design sent in by Mr. Barry (afterwards Sir Charles Barry), the famous architect, who has left many other monuments of his genius to the nation, but whose most conspicuous monument, assuredly, is found in the pile of buildings which ornament the Thames at Westminster.

Only the mere fact that the selection of the design for the new building was made during the lifetime of William the Fourth connects the reign of that monarch with the history of Westminster Palace. It was not until the reign of Queen Victoria had made some way that the towers of the palace began to show themselves above the river; but the new principle which offered the design for the work to public competition, and the fact that Mr. Barry's design was chosen from all others, oblige us to associate the building of the new chambers with the reign of a sovereign whose name otherwise was not likely to be identified with any triumph of artistic genius. We must not set down to any defects in the architect's constructive skill the fact that the new House of Commons was almost as inadequate to the proper accommodation of its members as the old House had been. The present House of Commons does not provide sitting accommodation for anything like the number of members who are entitled to have seats on its benches. Even if the galleries set apart for the use of members only, galleries that are practically useless for the purposes of debate, were to be filled to their utmost, there still would not be room for nearly all the members of the House of Commons. But at the time when the new House was built, the general impression of statesmen on both sides seemed to be that, if the chamber were made spacious enough to give a seat to every member, the result would be

that the room would be too large for anything like practical, easy, and satisfactory discussion, and that the chamber would become a mere hall of declamation.

At that time almost all the business of the House, even to its most minute details of legislation, was done in the debating-chamber itself. The scheme which was adopted a great many years later, and by means of which the shaping of the details of legislative measures is commonly relegated to Grand Committees, as the Parliamentary phrase goes, had not then found any favor with statesmen. The daily work of the House was left, for the most part, in the hands of the members of the Administration and the leading members of the Opposition, or, in cases where the interests of a particular class, or trade, or district were concerned, to the men who had special knowledge of each subject of legislation. It was therefore argued, and with much plausibility, that to construct a chamber large enough to hold seats for all the members would be to impose an insupportable, and at the same time a quite unnecessary, strain upon the energies and the lungs of the comparatively small number of men by whom the actual business of the House had to be carried on. This argument was used with much effect, not many years before his death, by Mr. Gladstone himself, and there can be no doubt that it maintained itself against the many successive proposals which have been made from time to time for the enlargement of the representative chamber. In most other legislative halls, on the Continent or in the United States or in Canada, each member has his own seat, and finds it ready for his occupation at any time; but in the House of Commons on great occasions the ordinary member has to come to the House at the earliest moment when its doors are open, hours and hours before the business begins, in order to have even a chance of obtaining a seat during the debate, and a large number of members are fated, whatever their energy and their early rising, to sigh for a seat in vain. The question has been raised again and again in the House of Commons, and all manner of propositions have been brought forward and plans suggested for the

enlargement of the debating-chamber, but up to the present the condition of things remains just as it was when the new Houses of Parliament were opened in the reign of Queen Victoria.

Sir Charles Barry's design has the great advantage that it renders an increase in the size of the House of Commons possible and practicable without a complete reconstruction of all that part of the vast building which belongs to the representative chamber and its various offices. In the opinion of many leading members of the House of Commons the number of representatives is needlessly large for the purposes demanded by an adequate and proportionate system of representation, and it is not difficult to foresee changes which might lead, with universal satisfaction, to a reduction in the number of members in the House of Commons. It may also be anticipated that the system that relegates the details of legislative measures to the consideration of Grand Committees may be gradually extended as time goes on, and that thus the committee work of the House of Commons itself may grow less and less by degrees. In either case, or in both cases together, it might easily come to pass that the present debating-chamber would supply ample sitting room to all its members on every ordinary occasion, although it is hardly possible to understand how, on a night of great debate, with a momentous division impending, the present chamber could be expected to accommodate the full number of members entitled to claim seats there. At all events, it is hardly possible to imagine any condition of things arising which could call for any alteration in the construction of the representative chamber which would be likely to affect, in the slightest degree, the general character of that palace of legislation which was planned and founded during the reign of William the Fourth, was opened in the reign of Queen Victoria, and will bear down to posterity the name of its architect, Sir Charles Barry.

Before leaving this subject it is of interest to note that the question of providing accommodation for ladies desiring to listen to the debates in the House of Commons

was brought up more than once during the reign of William the Fourth. Miss Martineau, in her "History of the Thirty Years' Peace," makes grave complaint of the manner in which the proposal for the admission of ladies to hear the debates was treated alike by the legislators who favored and by those who resisted the proposition. The whole subject, she appears to think, was treated as a huge joke. One set of members advocated the admission of ladies on the ground, among other reasons, that their presence in the House of Commons would tend to keep the legislators sober, and prevent them from garnishing their speeches with unseemly expressions. Another set stood out against the proposal on the ground that if ladies were allowed to sit in a gallery in sight of the members, the result would be that the representatives would cease to pay any real attention to the business of debate, and would occupy themselves chiefly in studying the faces and the dresses of the fair visitors, and trying to interchange glances with the newly admitted spectators.

The conditions under which ladies may be permitted to listen to the debates in the House of Commons form a subject of something like periodical discussion up to the present day. There is, as everybody knows, a certain number of seats set apart behind the Press gallery in the House of Commons for the accommodation of women, who are admitted by orders which members can obtain who are successful in a balloting process which takes place a week in advance. About twenty members only out of more than six hundred can win two seats each for any one sitting of the House, and no member can approach the ballot for at least a week after he has accomplished a success. The Ladies' Gallery holds only a very small number of women, and it is jealously screened by a gilded grating something like that through which the women of an Eastern potentate's household are permitted to gaze upon the stage from their box in the theatre.

It will perhaps be news to some readers to hear that this ladies' gallery, such as it is, is technically not within the precincts of the House of Commons at all. It is not an

institution of the House, nor does it come under the rules of the House, nor is it recognized by the authorities of the House. It is there, as a matter of fact, but it is not supposed to be there, and the Speaker of the House, who is omnipotent over all other parts of the chamber, has no control over the occupants of that gilded cage, and is technically assumed to be ignorant of their presence. The Speaker can, on proper occasions, order strangers "to withdraw" from all the other galleries set apart for the use of outsiders, but he has no power over the ladies who sit in the gallery high above his chair. It has even happened that when subjects had, as a matter of necessity, to be discussed in the House of Commons which the Speaker did not consider quite suitable for an audience of both sexes, he has sent a private and unofficial intimation to the Ladies' Gallery that it would, in his opinion, be more seemly if its occupants were to withdraw. But on some occasions a few of the ladies declined to withdraw, and the Speaker had no power to enforce his advice, seeing that, technically, there was no Ladies' Gallery within his jurisdiction. Some time, no doubt, the House of Commons will adopt more reasonable regulations, and will recognize the right of women to be treated as rational creatures, as members of the community, as citizens, and allowed to sit, as men do, in an open gallery, and listen to the debates which must always more or less concern their own interests. It is a curious fact that the galleries and other parts of the House of Lords to which women have admission are open to the public gaze just as are those parts of the House in which male strangers are permitted to listen to the debates of the peers.

In the year 1835 the public mind of these countries was much surprised, and even startled, by the discovery, or what at least seemed to be the discovery, of a great and portentous plot against the established order of succession to the throne. This plot was declared to be carried on by the Orange societies which had for many years been growing up in Great Britain and Ireland, and throughout many of the colonies and dependencies. This Orange organiza-

tion began in the North of Ireland, and was originally intended to crush out the Catholic associations which were then coming into existence all over Ireland for the political and religious emancipation of the Roman Catholics, and for strengthening the national cause in the Irish Parliament. There is so little to be said in defence, or even in excuse, of the Orange organization in its earlier years that it seems only fair to admit the possibility of its having been seriously intended, in the beginning, for the defence of Great Britain against an Irish rebellion fomented and supported by France.

The Orange associations took their title from the name of the royal house which had given William the Third as a sovereign to England, and the name of Orange was understood to illustrate its hostility to all Jacobite plots and schemes, which were naturally assumed to have the countenance and the favor of England's foreign enemies. We have seen already, in the course of this history, how the Orange societies acted before the rebellion of '98 in Ireland, and how orange and green became the rival colors of those who denounced and those who supported every Irish national movement. When the rebellion was suppressed, and Grattan's Parliament was extinguished, the Orange associations were not in the least disposed to admit that their work had been accomplished and that there was no further need for their active existence. On the contrary, they increased their efforts to spread their power all over the country, and, claiming for themselves the credit of having been a main influence in the suppression of the Irish rebellion, they appealed for the support of all loyal Englishmen to increase their numbers and strengthen their hands. Orangeism, which had at first only been known in Ireland, began to spread widely throughout Great Britain. Orange Lodges were everywhere formed; Orange Grand Masters were appointed; a whole vocabulary of Orange titles, passwords, and phrases was invented; a complete hierarchy of Orange officialism was created, and an invisible network of Orangeism held the members of the organization together. The Orange conspiracy, if

we may call it so, had been spreading its ramifications energetically during the later years of George the Fourth's reign, and had succeeded in obtaining the countenance, and indeed the active support, of many peers, of at least some bishops, and even of certain members of the royal family. The Duke of York, who at that time stood nearest in the succession to the throne, was a patron of the societies, and was invited to become Grand Master of the whole organization. The invitation would in all probability have been accepted if the Duke had not been assured, on the most authoritative advice, that a secret organization of such a nature was distinctly an illegal body. When the Duke died, and it seemed all but certain that the next King of England must be his brother William, Duke of Clarence, the Orange lodges transferred their allegiance to the Duke of Cumberland, who consented to become their Grand Master.

The Duke of Cumberland, as we have already seen, was a Tory of the most extreme order; an inveterate enemy to every kind of reform and every progressive movement, a man who was not merely unpopular but thoroughly detested among all classes who valued political freedom, religious liberty, and the spread of education. Soon after William the Fourth's accession to the throne a new impulse was given to Orangeism by the King's yielding to the demand for popular reform, and by the measures and the movements which began to follow the passing of Lord Grey's Reform Bill. The Orangemen all over these countries then began to look upon the Duke of Cumberland as their natural leader, and there can be little doubt that in the minds of many of them, in the minds of some of the most influential among them, there was growing up the wild hope that the Duke of Cumberland might become King of England. The Orange lodges became a vast secret organization with signs and passwords, a mysterious political confraternity, the Grand Master of which was a sort of head centre, to adopt a phrase belonging to a more modern conspiracy, and performing, indeed, something like the part which Continental Freemasonry at one time

aspired to play. The Orange lodges in Great Britain and Ireland swelled in numbers until they had more than three hundred thousand members solemnly and secretly sworn to obey all the orders of the leaders. More than that, the emissaries of the Orange lodges contrived to make their influence widely felt in the Army, and it became clear afterwards that a large number of soldiers were sworn confederates of the association.

Some of the explanations which were afterwards given to account for the sudden spread of Orangeism might well appear incredible at first to an intelligent reader of our day not acquainted with this singular chapter of history. But it was afterwards made perfectly certain that a large number of credulous persons were prevailed upon to join the Orange ranks by the positive assurance that the Duke of Wellington had formed the determination to seize the crown of England and to put it on his own head, and that the Duke of Cumberland was the only man who could save the realm from this treasonable enterprise. It seems hardly possible now to understand that there could have been one human creature in England silly and ignorant enough to believe the Duke of Wellington capable of so preposterous and so wicked a scheme. Lord John Russell has left it on record that when he visited Napoleon in his exile at Elba, the fallen Emperor, during the course of a long conversation, expressed his strong belief that Wellington would seize the crown of England. Lord John endeavored to convince him that such an idea went entirely outside the limits of sober reality; but Napoleon refused to be convinced, and blandly put the question aside with the manner of one who knows better but does not particularly care to impress his opinion on unwilling ears. One can easily understand how such an idea might come into the mind of Napoleon, who knew little or nothing about the actual conditions of English political and social life, and who had experience of his own to demonstrate the possibility of a great military conqueror becoming at once the ruler of a State. But it seems hard indeed to understand how any sane Englishman could have believed that

the simple, loyal, unselfish Duke of Wellington could allow such an idea to enter his mind for a moment, or could see his way to make it a reality even if he did entertain it. Yet it cannot be doubted that numbers of Englishmen were induced to join Orange lodges by the positive assurance that thus only could they save the State from Wellington's daring ambition.

One of the principal instruments of the Orange organization was a certain Colonel Fairman, who held an important position in what may be called its military hierarchy, and was undoubtedly at one time intrusted by the Duke of Cumberland with the fullest authority to act as the emissary of the Grand Master to make known his will and convey his orders. Whether the Duke of Cumberland ever really entertained the project ascribed to him of seizing the crown for himself and shutting out the Princess Victoria can, in all probability, never be known as a certainty; but there can be no question that his actions often justified such a belief, and that many of his most devoted Orange followers looked up to him as the resolute hero of such a project to save England from Whigs and Liberals, and Roman Catholics, and mob orators, and petticoat government, and all other such enemies to the good old state of things as established by the wisdom of our ancestors and the Act of Settlement. The whole question was raised in the House of Commons during the session of 1835 by Joseph Hume, the consistent and persevering advocate of sound economic doctrine, of political freedom, of peace, retrenchment, and reform. Hume obtained the appointment of a committee to inquire into the whole subject, and the committee had no great difficulty in finding out that Colonel Fairman had been carrying on, with or without the consent or authority of his Grand Master the Duke of Cumberland, what must be called a treasonable conspiracy through the Orange lodges and even through Orangemen who were actually serving in the King's Army. In 1836 Hume brought up the question once again and obtained so much support from Lord John Russell, then acting as Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, that

an address was unanimously voted to the King calling on him to proclaim the condemnation of the Orange conspiracy. The Duke of Cumberland disclaimed all treasonable purposes, and declared that many of the steps taken by Fairman and other Orange emissaries had been taken without his orders and even without his knowledge. Fairman disappeared from the scene when the crisis seemed to become too serious for his personal convenience, and one of the Orange emissaries, against whom a prosecution was to be instituted, was removed by a sudden death from the reach of the criminal law. The Duke of Cumberland announced that he had already, of his own inspiration, ordered the dissolution of the Orange lodges. The King, in his reply to the address in the House of Commons, declared himself entirely in accordance with the resolutions of the House, and thus the whole conspiracy came to an end, and the Government thought it well to allow the subject to pass into obscurity without further action.

This was the end of the Orange organization, as it was known in the days of William the Fourth. At a later date Orangeism was again revived, but only in the form which it still maintains, by which it is now known to us all as a political association, openly avowing legitimate opinions and purposes, and as fairly entitled to existence as any political club or other such organization recognized in the movements of modern life. The treasonable conspiracy, like many another evil, died when it was compelled to endure the light of day.

CHAPTER LXXIX.

THE CLOSE OF A REIGN AND THE OPENING OF AN ERA.

MANY lives that now belong to history had faded into history during the reign of William the Fourth. William Wilberforce, the great champion of every noble and philanthropic movement known to his times, had passed from the living world which he had done so much to improve. Wilberforce lived to see the triumph of that movement against slavery and the slave-trade which he, more than any other of his time, had inspired and promoted. He had been compelled by ill-health to give up his position in Parliament for several years before his death, but he had never withdrawn his watchful sympathy and such co-operation as it was in his power to give from any cause to which he had consecrated his life. His name will always be illustrious in English history as that of one who loved his fellow-men and who gave expression to that love in every act and effort of his public and private career. Jeremy Bentham, one of the greatest of modern thinkers, the founder of more than one school of political and economic doctrine, a man whose influence on human thought is never likely to pass altogether away, died in June, 1832. Bentham's principle, the greatest happiness of the greatest number, has often been narrowly and unfairly judged, but it may be doubted whether a sounder theory of political and social government has ever come out of the mere wisdom of man. The phrase utilitarianism, which came into use as the summary of his teaching, has often been misunderstood and misapplied, and perhaps some excuse was found for the misinterpretation of his meaning in his decision that his dead body should be given up for the purpose of anatomy and not buried in earth to be of service

only to the worms. Many of us have seen the skeleton of Jeremy Bentham clothed in his habit as he lived in a room of that University College which he helped to make a success.

Sir James Mackintosh brought his noble career to a close during this reign. Mackintosh had been historian, philosopher, and politician, and, like Macaulay, he had rendered great services in India as well as in England. Like Macaulay also, he had been listened to with the deepest interest whenever he addressed the House of Commons, although his gifts and his temperament seemed suited rather for the study than for Parliamentary life. Another man whose death belongs to the reign of William the Fourth, whose teachings were at one time the occasion for incessant controversy—and indeed caused most controversy where they were least understood—was Thomas Robert Malthus. In many classes of readers the name of Malthus came to be associated for a while with the idea of some strange and cruel doctrine which taught that wars and pestilences and other calamities that have the effect of sweeping redundant populations off the world are really good things in themselves, to be encouraged by beneficent legislation. It is hardly necessary to say now that nothing could be more narrow and even more perverse than this interpretation of Malthus's philosophy. Another of the teaching minds which passed from the contemplation of earthly subjects during the reign was that of James Mill, the historian of British India and the promulgator of great doctrines in political economy. James Mill, like Edmund Burke, had studied India thoroughly, and come to understand it as few men had done who had lived there for years and years, although, like Burke, he had never been within sight of the shores of Hindustan. Mill divined India as Talleyrand said that Alexander Hamilton, the American statesman and companion of George Washington, had divined Europe. Charles Greville, writing in November, 1830, speaks of meeting at breakfast "young Mill, a political economist," and adds that "young Mill is the son of Mill who wrote the 'History of British India,'

and said to be cleverer than his father." The elder Mill would no doubt have gladly endorsed the saying, and it may be assumed that history has given its judgment in the same way, but history will certainly maintain the fame of the father as well as the fame of the son. A man of a very different order from any of these we have just mentioned, but who has made a reputation of his own in literature as well as in politics, closed his career within the same reign. We have already spoken in this volume of William Cobbett's command of simple, strong English, which made his prose style hardly inferior to that of Swift himself. Indeed, one of the most distinguished authors of the present day, a man who has made a name in political life as well as in literature, has been heard to contend with earnestness that, as a writer of pure, strong, idiomatic English, Cobbett might be accounted the rival of Swift. The great engineer, Telford, and the really gifted and genuine, although eccentric and opinionated, physician, Dr. Abernethy, were among the celebrities whose deaths rather than their works belong to the time when William the Fourth was King.

Poetry, romance, and art suffered many heavy losses during the same time. We have already chronicled the death of Walter Scott. One who had known him and had been kindly welcomed by him, James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, died three years after Scott in 1835. The death of George Crabbe was one of the memorable events of the reign. Crabbe might well be described in the words which a later singer set out for his own epitaph, as "the poet of the poor." Crabbe pictured the struggles, the sufferings, the occasional gleams of happiness which are common to the lives of the poor with a realism as vigorous and as vivid as the prose of Charles Dickens himself could show, and he had touches here and there of exquisitely tender poetic feeling which were not unworthy of Keats or Wordsworth. Nothing was nobler in the life of Burke than his early appreciation and generous support of Crabbe. Hannah More died in 1833. The fame of this remarkable woman has somewhat faded of late years, and even the

most successful of her writings find probably but few readers among the general public. She has, however, won for herself a distinct place in history, not less by her life itself than by her work in various fields of literature. In her early days she had been an associate of Samuel Johnson, Burke, and Goldsmith, and Reynolds, and she had known Macaulay from his childhood. She was always a writer with a purpose, whether she wrote a religious tract or an ethical essay, a tragedy or a novel. She always strove to be a teacher, and the intellectual gifts with which she had been endowed were only valued by her in so far as they enabled her to serve the education and the moral progress of humanity. "The rapt One of the godlike forehead, the heaven-eyed creature," as Wordsworth described Samuel Taylor Coleridge, died in 1834. Coleridge belonged to an order of intellect far higher than that to which Crabbe or Hannah More had any claim. He was indeed a man of genius in all but the very highest meaning of the word. He was poet, philosopher, teacher, and critic, and in each department, had he worked in that alone, he must have won renown. Perhaps if he had not worked in so many fields he might have obtained even a more exalted position than that which history must assuredly assign to him. His influence as a philosopher is probably fading now, although he unquestionably inspired whole schools of philosophic thought, and the world remembers him rather as the author of "The Ancient Mariner" than as the metaphysical student and teacher. As a critic, in the highest sense of the word, he will always have the praise that should belong to the first who aroused the attention of Englishmen to the great new school of thoughtful criticism which was growing up in Germany under the influence of Lessing and of Goethe. He would have deserved fame if only for his translations of some of Schiller's noblest dramas. It has been justly said that Coleridge by his successful efforts to spread over England the influence of the higher German criticism did much to restore Shakespeare to that position as head of the world's modern literature from which English

criticism and English tastes had done so much to displace him since the days of Dryden.

The death of Coleridge was soon followed by that of Charles Lamb, and, indeed, Coleridge's death may have had some effect in hastening that of his dear and devoted friend. In the same poem from which we have just quoted the lines that picture Coleridge, Wordsworth tells how "Lamb, the frolic and the gentle, has vanished from his lonely hearth." Lamb was the most exquisite of essayists and letter-writers, a man whose delicate humor, playful irony, and happy gift of picturesque phrase claim for him true poetic genius. The present generation has probably but a faint memory of Felicia Hemans, whose verse had at one time an immense popularity among all readers with whom sweetness of sentiment, musical ease, fluency of verse, and simple tenderness of feeling were enough to constitute poetic art. She, too, died not long before the close of the reign. Many men who had won wide fame as pulpit orators and as religious teachers of various orders marked by their deaths as well as by their lives this chapter of history. Rowland Hill was one of these, the great popular preacher, who flung aside conventionalities, and was ready to preach anywhere if he had hope of gathering an audience around him whom he could move and teach, whether he spoke from the pulpit of a church or a chapel, or from a platform in the open air, or in the midst of a crowd with no platform at all. Another was Robert Hall, admittedly one of the most eloquent preachers of modern times. Yet another was Adam Clarke, the author of the celebrated "Commentary on the Holy Scriptures." Of course the fame of these men and women does not belong in the fuller sense to the reign of William the Fourth. Some of them had wellnigh done their work before the reign began, none of them can be said to have won any new celebrity during the reign. Their names are introduced here because their deaths were events of the moment and lend, in that way, additional importance to the reign's history.

The fame of Mrs. Siddons can hardly be said to belong in any sense to the days when William the Fourth sat on

the English throne, for she had retired from the stage many years before his accession, and only appeared in public on rare occasions and for some charitable object; but she died within the reign, and it must therefore find another distinction by its association with her name. Two years later died Edmund Kean, who also may be said to have closed his career as an actor before the reign had begun. Of the fame that is won on the boards of a theatre posterity can only judge by hearsay. The poet, the novelist, the historian, the philosopher, the painter, the sculptor, leave their works always living behind them, and the later generation has the same materials on which to form its judgment as were open to the world when the author or artist had just completed his work. Even the orator can bequeath to all ages the words he has spoken, although they are no longer to be accompanied by the emphasis of his gesture and accentuated by the music of his voice. Of the actor and the actress who have long passed away we can know nothing but what their contemporaries have told us, and can form no judgment of our own. We can hardly be wrong, however, in regarding Mrs. Siddons as by far the greatest tragic actress who has ever appeared on the English stage, and Edmund Kean as the greatest actor of Shakespearian tragedy whom England has seen since the days of Garrick. In mentioning these two names, we must also be reminded of the name of Charles Mathews the elder, an actor of extraordinary versatility and genuine dramatic power, who is, however, best remembered as the originator of the style of theatrical entertainment which may be described as the "At Home" performance, in which he probably never had a rival. Many of us can still remember his yet more gifted son, the younger Charles Mathews, the incomparable light comedian of a later day.

We have told thus far, in this chapter, only of lights going out in literature, art, philosophy, theology, and science. Let us relieve the picture by recording that one rising star of the first magnitude in literature cast its earliest rays over these latest years of William the Fourth. Early in 1836 the "Sketches by Boz" were published in a

collected form, and a little later in the same year appeared the first number of "The Pickwick Papers." Then the world began to know that a man of thoroughly original genius had arisen, and before the reign was out the young author, Charles Dickens, was accorded by all those whose judgment was worth having that place among the foremost English novelists which he has ever since retained and is ever likely to retain. "The Pickwick Papers" opened a new era in the history of English novel-writing. By a curious coincidence, the proposal of a young art student to furnish illustrations for Dickens's books being declined by the author, led the young art student to believe that he had mistaken his vocation in trying to illustrate the works of other men, and he turned his attention to literature, and afterwards became the one great rival of Dickens, and will be known to all time as the author of "Vanity Fair" and "The Newcomes." None of the writings which made Thackeray's fame appeared during the time of William the Fourth, but his name may be associated with the close of the reign by the incident which brought him into an acquaintanceship with Dickens, and which led to his abandoning the pencil for the pen.

Towards the close of the reign died one of the most audacious and astonishing impostors known to modern times. Even the Tichborne claimant of the reign that followed makes but a poor show for inventiveness and enterprise when compared with the woman who described herself as the Princess Olivia of Cumberland, and who claimed to be the daughter of King William's brother. This woman was the daughter of a house painter named Wilmot, and was educated under the care of her uncle, the Rector of a parish in Warwickshire. She received a good education, and even in her young days seemed to have a desire to exhibit herself as the heroine of strange adventures. At an early age she was married to John Serres, a man distinguished in his art, who obtained the position of painter to the King and the Duke of Clarence, afterwards William the Fourth, and it was probably this association with the surroundings of greater personages that inspired

her with some of her bold conceptions. Her husband and she did not get on very well together, and a separation took place; after which for a while Mrs. Serres appeared on the stage, and then took to the art of painting on her own account, and actually succeeded in getting herself appointed landscape painter to the Prince of Wales. Her next attempt was at novel-writing, and she also published a volume of poems and even ventured on the composition of an opera. Later still she made herself conspicuous by writing a volume to prove that her uncle, the Rev. James Wilmot, was the actual author of the letters of Junius. That was only a beginning, for she soon after proclaimed herself the legitimate daughter, by a secret marriage, of the Duke of Cumberland. She made her claims known to the Prince Regent and all the other members of the royal family, and demanded a formal hearing in order that she might prove her right to rank as one of them. She was so far successful that her claim was actually taken up by a member of the House of Commons, who moved for the appointment of a Committee of the House to give it a full investigation. Sir Robert Peel promptly settled the question, so far as regarded the appointment of a committee, by announcing that he held in his hand a manifesto of the Princess Olivia, addressed to the high powers of the kingdom of Poland, in which she claimed to be the descendant of Stanislaus Augustus. Sir Robert Peel urged that as the two claims were practically irreconcilable and were both made by the same claimant, the House of Commons might consider itself relieved from the necessity of appointing a Committee of Inquiry, and the House accepted his advice. Still, it is almost needless to say that many persons were found quite willing to believe in the genuineness of the Princess Olivia's claim, and even in the genuineness of both her claims, and she had indeed, for a time, a party of faithful and credulous followers as strong as that which backed up the pretensions of the adventurer from Wapping who proclaimed himself to be Sir Roger Tichborne. The later years of the self-created Princess Olivia were spent in poverty, and she died within the rules of the

King's Bench. Even in much later days, however, her name was not wholly forgotten.

A few lines may be spared to describe the career of a man who died not long after the death of the Princess Olivia, and who belonged to that class which used to be described as wonderful characters. This was a man named James Norris, who came of a family of good position having property near Devizes. Norris received a good education, and at one time promised to make a name for himself as a student of natural history. He is described as "handsome in person and elegant in manners," and we are told that "he possessed a highly cultivated mind which seemed to promise in early life eminence in society, and that he would rise to be an ornament to the age in which he lived." At a comparatively early age he had outlived all his family, and thus became the owner of large landed property. He suddenly became a prey to strange, overmastering habits of indolence, apathy, and shyness, which gradually estranged him from all society. He neglected his property, allowed his rents to remain for years and years in the hands of his steward, without troubling himself about them, and allowed his dividends to grow up in the hands of his bankers without concerning himself as to their amount, or even opening any letters which might be addressed to him on the subject. He gave up shaving and allowed his hair and beard to grow as they would; he never changed his clothing or his linen until they became worn to rags; he lay in bed for the greater part of the day, took his principal meal about midnight, then had a lonely ramble, and returned to bed as the morning drew near. He was hardly ever seen by anybody but his servants, and declined any communication even with his nearest neighbors. When an occasion arose which actually compelled him to communicate with any one from the outer world, he would only consent to speak with a door, or at least a screen, between him and the other party to the conversation. All the time he does not seem to have been engaged in any manner of study or work, and he appears to have simply devoted himself to the full indulgence of his pas-

sion for solitude. His figure, or some sketch suggested by it, has been made use of more than once by writers of fiction, but the man himself was a living figure in the reign of William the Fourth, and died not long before its close.

Under the date of March 31, 1837, Charles Greville writes: "Among the many old people who have been cut off by this severe weather, one of the most remarkable is Mrs. Fitzherbert, who died at Brighton at above eighty years of age. She was not a clever woman, but of a very noble spirit, disinterested, generous, honest, and affectionate, greatly beloved by her friends and relations, popular in the world, and treated with uniform distinction and respect by the Royal Family." The death of this celebrated woman recalls to memory one of the saddest and most shameful chapters in the whole sad and shameful story of the utterly worthless Prince who became George the Fourth.

Meanwhile the reign of William the Fourth was hastening to its close. The King had had several attacks of illness, and more than once, before the end was yet quite near, his physical condition went down so low that those around him believed it impossible for him to rise again. He rallied, however, more than once, and regained his good spirits and gave hope to those who had any real wish for his recovery that the reign had not yet quite come to an end. In some of his better moods he showed glimpses of that higher nature which was wont to assert itself fitfully now and then at many periods of his career. More than once he prayed fervently in these later days that his life might be spared until the Princess Victoria should come of age. Almost to the end the usual festivities were kept up at Windsor Castle, and the Queen, by his wish, visited the race-course at Ascot a few days before the end came; but it is recorded that she only remained an hour on the ground. The formal announcement that the King was seriously ill was not made until within a few days of the sovereign's death. Even when regular bulletins began to be issued, they were so sparing of their information, and

so carefully guarded against any suggestion of alarm, that the outer public had really very little to go upon, except the bare fact that the King was growing to be an old man, and that he was liable to fits of illness just as he had been for years before. It would appear that it was William's whim to dictate the bulletins himself, and that he was very anxious not to allow a word to go forth which might convey a knowledge of his actual condition. The poor old sovereign was apparently inspired by the full conviction that the prolongation of his life was of the utmost importance to the welfare of his people, and it may be fully believed that his unwillingness to admit the imminence of danger to his life came from an honest sort of public purpose. He gave his attention to the business of the State almost to the very last. All the time those who were immediately around the sinking sovereign knew quite well that the end was close at hand, and were already consulting earnestly and constantly as to the steps which ought to be taken to prepare for the new reign, even as to the matter of mere ceremonials which were to accompany the accession of a woman as sovereign. On June 16 Greville says: "Met Sir Robert Peel in the Park, and talked with him about the beginning of the new reign. He said that it was very desirable that the young Queen should appear as much as possible emancipated from all restraint, and exhibit a capacity for the discharge of her high functions. That the most probable as well as the most expedient course she could adopt would be to rely entirely on the advice of Melbourne, and she might with great propriety say that she thought it incumbent on her to follow the example which had been set by her two uncles, her predecessors, George the Fourth and William the Fourth." Each of these had retained the ministers whom he found in office, although not quite of his own pattern. There were some fears, at the time, that Leopold, King of the Belgians, might hasten over to England, and might exercise, or at least be suspected of exercising, an undue influence over the young Princess Victoria. Readers at the present day will notice, perhaps with peculiar interest, the observation made by

Greville that "Lord Durham is on his way home, and his return is regarded with no little curiosity, because he may endeavor to play a great political part, and materially to influence the opinions, or at least the councils, of the Queen." Lord Durham, up to this time, was regarded by most people merely as a Radical of a very advanced order, burning with strong political ambitions, fitfully impelled with passionate likings and dislikings, and capable of proving a serious trouble to the quiet of the new reign. We know now that Durham was soon drawn away almost altogether from home politics, disappointing thereby many of his Radical admirers, and that he found a new field of success, and established for himself an abiding-place in history as the statesman to whose courage, energy, and genius is owing the foundation of the self-governing, prosperous, peaceful, and loyal Dominion of Canada, which has again and again proved itself in recent times an important part of the empire's strength.

Writing of the Princess Victoria, Greville goes on to say: "What renders speculation so easy, and events uncertain, is the absolute ignorance of everybody, without exception, of the character, disposition, and capacity of the Princess. She has been kept in such jealous seclusion by her mother (never having slept out of her bedroom, nor been alone with anybody but herself and the Baroness Lehzen), that not one of her acquaintance, none of the attendants at Kensington, not even the Duchess of Northumberland, her governess, have any idea what she is or what she promises to be." Greville tells us that "the Tories are in great consternation at the King's approaching death," because they fear that the new sovereign is not likely to make any advances to them, while "the Whigs, to do them justice, behave with great decency; whatever they may really feel, they express a very proper concern, and I have no doubt Melbourne really feels the concern he expresses." Then Greville dismisses, for the moment, the whole subject with the words: "The public in general don't seem to care much, and only wonder what will happen." The chronicler no doubt expressed very correctly the pub-

lic feeling. Of course, there is nothing surprising in the fact that while the poor King lay dying those who had any official relations with the Court or with Parliament were occupying themselves, during the greater part of the time, with speculations as to the immediate changes which his death would bring about, and with discussions and disputations as to the proper arrangements and ceremonials to accompany and to follow his passing away from this world. Something of the same kind must have happened in the case of any Windsor shopkeeper whose family and friends were in hourly expectation of his death, and it is only when such discussions and arrangements come to be recorded as a part of the history of a reign that we are likely to feel impressed by the difference between the prosaic, practical details of the business of this world and the sacred solemnity of the event that is supposed already to cast its shadow before.

There appears to have been some dispute between the authorities of Church and State as to the offering up of prayers in the churches for the recovery of the King. William was anxious that the prayers should be offered at once, and the Privy Council assembled to make the order; but the Bishop of London raised an objection, not to the offering of the prayers, but to the suggestion that the prayers were to be offered in obedience to an order coming from the Lords in Council. The Bishop maintained that the Lords had no power to make any such order. In the discussion which took place it appears that some eminent lawyers were of opinion that even the King himself had no power to order the use of any particular prayers, or, at all events, that even if he had any such power it was in virtue of his position as head of the Church and not as head of the State. This was indeed to raise what the late Baron Bramwell once humorously described as "a most delightful point of law." The difficulty appears to have been got over by a sort of compromise, the Archbishop of Canterbury undertaking to order, on his own authority, that prayers should be offered up in all churches for the King's recovery, and the order was no

doubt dutifully obeyed. To complete the satirical humor of the situation King William ought actually to have died while the dispute was still going on as to the precise authority by which prayers were to be offered up for his recovery, but some sort of effective arrangement was made during the monarch's few remaining hours of life, and the appeal on his behalf was duly made.

On June 19 the King was found to be falling deeper and deeper into weakness, which seemed to put all chance of his recovery out of reasonable consideration, and the Sacrament was administered to him by the Archbishop of Canterbury. One of the King's last utterances may be set down as in the best sense characteristic—it illustrated, that is to say, the best side of his character. "Believe me," were the words of the dying King, "that I have always been a religious man." It may be admitted, in justice to William, that according to his generally dull and often confused and hazy lights he did always recognize the standard, higher than that of mere expediency, or political compromise, or personal convenience, set up to regulate the conduct even of princes.

The reign came to an end on June 20, 1837. Shortly after two o'clock that morning King William passed away. He died calmly and without a struggle. The closing hours of his life had a resignation and a dignity about them which might well have fitted the end of one whose whole career, public and private, had been more dignified and more noble than that of the poor, eccentric, restless, illiterate personage who succeeded the last of the Georges on the throne of England. It must be owned that, whatever the personal defects and disadvantages of the sovereign, the reign of King William the Fourth had been more beneficent in politics than that of any of his predecessors since the days of Queen Anne. For the first time in the modern history of England the voice of the people had been authorized by legislation to have some influence over the direction of national affairs. The passing of the great Reform measure, and the rush of other reforms which followed it, opened the way for a new system of administra-

tion, the beneficial effects of which in the political and social life of the empire have been expanding ever since. With the reign of William the Fourth the principle of personal rule, or rule by the mere decree and will of the sovereign, came to an end. If the reign is to be judged by the work it accomplished, it cannot but be set down in history as a great reign. Perhaps there were few men in England of whatever class, high or low, who had less of the quality of personal greatness than William the Fourth. He had greatness thrust upon him by the mere fact that fate would have him King. He contributed nothing towards the accomplishment of the many important works which are the best monuments of his reign, except by the negative merit of having at least not done anything to prevent their being accomplished. Even this, however, is a claim to the respect of posterity which must be denied to some of his nearest predecessors. He ruled over a great country without acquiring during his course any quality of greatness for himself. He was like the glass of the window, which admits the light of the sun without any light-creating power of its own.

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